

# Ernest the Carrot: Know Your Carrot

by Geoffrey McSkimming and Tohby Riddle

## Experimenting

ACELY1688 | EN2-1A

**Adopt and perform** the character of Ernest, first in a hot seat activity and then through role play.

Read the text with the students. In groups discuss the text, extract key information about Ernest (appearance, likes, dislikes), and complete a character analysis graphic organiser (suggested resource: [Character Profile](#)).

Play the drama game 'character walks'. Students initially walk around the classroom as themselves. The teacher will then call out a range of characters they need to become. For example: walk like a soldier, walk like a ballerina, walk like the Queen, walk like a toddler. Next, ask students as a group to speak like a range of characters. For example: speak like a soldier, speak like the Queen, speak like someone who is out of breath, speak like someone who is really excited.

Finally, ask the class to walk and talk as Ernest. Refer back to the text and identify key quotes ('jerky movements ... grating tenor voice'.) Model how to act out unfamiliar vocabulary, such as a 'tenor voice'. Call on volunteers to demonstrate their walk/voice to the class and then offer a quick explanation of why they have chosen to walk/talk like that.

After the warm up activity, return students to their groups to come up with a list of questions to ask Ernest. Example questions are below:

- What is something that really annoys you?
- What would your perfect day be like?
- Why you are dressed like that?
- Are you happy with ...?
- How does ... make you feel?
- What do you think about ...?

Each group nominate one 'Ernest' who is asked a series of questions by the other groups in the class. Encourage Ernest to adopt the voice and body language of the character.

After completing the hot seat activity, students add their new information to their graphic organiser in a different coloured pen, making visible the knowledge gained.

Students then apply their knowledge of Ernest's characterisation through a series of role play activities by following the steps below.

Create groups of 3-4 students. One person plays Ernest; the other members play roles that are entirely made up, or be based on characters in the comic serial (such as Al or Slender Loris). Provide groups with a role play scenario and allow a short period of rehearsal before the performance. For example:

- Ernest is waiting in a long line at a hot dog stand and he can't work out the reason for the delay. As a result he becomes increasingly frustrated.
- Ernest is trying to eat his lunch and a flock of pigeons arrive.
- Ernest is attending a party where everyone is formally dressed.

**Extension:** compare the characterisation of Ernest to another carrot in popular culture – Kevin the Aldi UK Christmas mascot. View the [Aldi Christmas Launch Advert 2020](#) and using graphic organisers and drama games, conduct a series of hot seat conversations and role played scenarios to reveal similarities and differences in the carrots' personalities. (Focus on Kevin's good nature and family values compared to Ernest's irritability and rudeness.)

# To the Sands of Time

story by Geoffrey McSkimming | illustrated by Peter Sheehan

## Experimenting

ACELT1607 | EN2-10C

**Generate** and answer questions about Doctor Irvin Thresh. Use these interpretations to compose Part Three of the story.

Prior to commencing this activity, reread *To the Sands of Time* - Part One (in Issue One of Blast Off) before reading Part Two, in this issue.

After reading the story in its entirety, explain to students that they will generate 'I Wonder' questions based on rereading key excerpts by following the steps below.

To complete this thinking routine, ask students to complete the sentence starter, 'I Wonder' after reading an excerpt. Explain to them that any question is valid and encourage creative thinking. Direct their attention to Doctor Thresh.

'I Wonder questions' can be completed on a worksheet, sticky notes, or on a collaborative whiteboard such as a Google Jamboard, which can then be projected.

Provide students with two excerpts:

- In Part One, pages 10-11 from "'Well my frrrriend ...'" to "'... arranged that we'd come and collect a sample of sand for him.'" Example 'I Wonder' questions: I wonder why Doctor Thresh didn't collect the sand himself? I wonder why Doctor Thresh is so interested in the banjo?
- In Part Two, pages 5-6 from "Jools tried to pad about on the sand..." to "... they were being pulled further and further down..." Example 'I Wonder' questions: I wonder if Doctor Thresh knew the task was this dangerous? I wonder if Doctor Thresh will feel guilty?

After students have compiled a list of 'I Wonder' questions individually, break them into groups of 3-4. Groups select their favourite 'I Wonder' questions, discuss interpretations and speculate answers using sentences stems (We believe, We imagine, We think). For example: We believe that Doctor Thresh was very busy conducting research and didn't have time to collect the sand himself.

Finally, students individually compose Part Three of *To the Sands of Time*. In Part Three, they should cover the following events and topics:

- Doctor Thresh's reaction to receiving the sand and Jool's story.
- An explanation of what Doctor Thresh will now do with the sand.

Work can be published collaboratively on platforms such as Google Classroom or Weebly so that students can read each other's interpretations of Doctor Thresh.

# Equipment profile

Read the text 'To the Sands of Time'. In the story, the Vern uses a piece of equipment called 'The hands of the *Cumulus*'. Complete the equipment profile below using information from the text.

Name: The hands of the *Cumulus*

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What were they used for?

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How do they work?

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Create an equipment profile for a piece of equipment you'd most like to own—perhaps a machine that would enable you to fast forward moments you find boring or something else imaginative. Think big!

Name:

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What is it used for?

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How does it work?

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# To Paint the Sky

poem by Jackie Hosking | illustrated by Matt Ottley

**Engaging Critically**  
ACELT1604 | EN2-4A

**Explore** reasons why poets use rhyming couplets.

Prior to reading the poem, present students with the lines jumbled up. Instruct students to search for rhyming words, match the couplets and predict the order in which they appear. To assist, draw students' attention to the opening words of a line (ask if a poem would start with the word 'And?') and the repetition of 'yellow too'.

Next, read the poem as it appears in The School Magazine. Explain and define the main language technique – rhyming couplets: two lines of approximately the same length, in which each end with a rhyming word, have the same rhythm and complete a thought.

Brainstorm possible reasons why poets might use rhyming couplets.

Answers could include: to make poems sound more interesting and to make it memorable.

Discuss the idea that rhyme can help to express your emotions by referencing *To Paint the Sky*. Explain to students that the poet feels delight when looking at a range of birds. The couplets are a list of reasons why she is delighted as they name and describe a range of beautiful birds.

Provide students with the worksheet [List of Feeling Words](#). Reread the poem and ask students to decide whether the poet is feeling pleasant or unpleasant feelings. Remind students that the poet has described the birds as 'pure delight'. Instruct students to then choose more specific words to describe the poet's positive feelings either from the subheadings in bold, or (more challenging) to choose specific words listed under the subheadings. Finally, students justify their choice of word, for example: "The poet feels *thrilled* to see three colourful types of bird in a tree."

# Developing settings

What information could you add to engage more of our senses as we read about the birds in 'To Paint the Sky'?

## Part A

Make brief notes below about what you could hear and feel in the Australian rainforest.

What I can smell the rainforest?	What I can hear in the rainforest?	What I can touch in the rainforest?
e.g. vegetation, rain		

## Part B

Imagine what you may be able to see, hear, smell and feel in each setting below: a city and a zoo. Write notes under each of the settings.

### A city

See: \_\_\_\_\_

Hear: \_\_\_\_\_

Smell: \_\_\_\_\_

Feel: \_\_\_\_\_

### A zoo

See: \_\_\_\_\_

Hear: \_\_\_\_\_

Smell: \_\_\_\_\_

Feel: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Cat Who Was an Empress

story by Simon Cooke | illustrated by Craig Phillips

**Engaging Critically**  
ACELT1605 | EN2-10C

**Extract** key information to compose an argument about the text.

After reading the story as a class, conduct an initial poll on the statement: “Min is Lyn – agree or disagree?”

Explain to the class that they have just based their decision on their instincts and feelings rather than logical analysis. By exploring the technique of ‘characterisation’ they will be able to analyse how likely it is that Min and Lyn are the same character.

Provide students with a simple definition of characterisation. (Suggested resource: [Defining Characterization](#)). Divide students into groups of 3-4. Allocate each group one character to analyse (Min, Lyn or Grandpa Sid).

Instruct students to scan the story and highlight information about their character. Record highlighted information onto a graphic organizer, such as an interactive [Literary Elements Map](#) or the worksheet [Analyzing Characters](#).

Sample answers could include:

## 1. Min

Appearance / Looks: diamonds on collar (not sure if real or fake).	Acts: listens to human conversation.	Others say / react: Grandpa Sid says that she is an Empress.	My inference: she behaves like a human and can understand language so she might not be a cat.
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## 2. Lyn

Appearance / Looks: elegant lady in fine red silk.	Acts: bossy, she tells Emma to make tea.	Others say / react: Emma’s mum says that she is a lady who was helped by Grandpa Sid.	My inference: she doesn’t seem to have many cat-like behaviours.
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## 3. Grandpa Sid

Appearance / Looks: (based on the illustration) is wearing war medals.	Acts: tells lots of exciting and hard-to-believe stories.	Others say / react: Emma’s dad says not to believe everything he says.	My inference: he’s a great storyteller, but not very trustworthy.
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Display completed graphic organisers so that students can compare character interpretations. Students complete a **T-chart** listing reasons why Min and Lin are either the same character, or not. Using their T-chart as a scaffold, students write an extended response to the statement: Min is Lyn.

Success criteria:

- Explain their interpretation of the text – are Min and Lyn the same character?
- Provide reasons why Min and Lyn are the same characters, or why they are not the same characters.
- Use quotations and close references.
- Make inferences about the quotations and close references.

After students complete their extended response, conduct a second poll on the statement: Min is Lyn. Discuss with the class why opinions may have changed after analysing the characterisation of the three protagonists.

# Will Wonders Never Cease: The Q'eswachaka Bridge

article by Zoe Disher | photos by Alamy

**Worksheet:** Amazing Bridges Summary and Research Sheet

## Experimenting

ACELY1689 | EN2-6B

**Present** an oral report on a bridge using the structural features of the Will Wonders Never Cease column.

After reading, distribute the worksheet Amazing Bridges Summary and Research Sheet. Explain to students that examining the layout of the article helps to answer the questions on the worksheet – the main idea is the rhetorical question in the article's byline, and important details can be found under the three subheadings. After this verbal scaffolding, students should complete the worksheet independently.

List possible answers to the worksheet's section on three important details (it is a five hundred year old traditional grass Inca bridge, it is made of woven grass, it needs to be remade every year because grass decays). Draw students' attention to the most common word used throughout the list (grass) – this is the article's main idea.

Instruct students that they will research another amazing and unusual bridge and present an oral report with a similar structure to the Will Wonders Never Cease column. Provide students with a list of webpages about bridges. Sample webpages include:

- [Amazing Bridges Around the World](#) (listicle requiring students to complete independent research)
- [Surreal Photos of India's Living Root Bridges](#)
- [Golden Bridge](#)

Students complete a second copy of the Amazing Bridges Summary and Research sheet. First, they locate and list three important details. Next, they look for words that are repeated across their three details. For example, if they have written about the Indian Bridge, they are likely to have used the word 'root' many times. Ask them to write the main idea as a rhetorical question, using the interrogatives *How*, *What* or *Why* as a sentence starter. (For example: 'How do you build a bridge from roots'.) Finally, students find two images that relate to the bridge and place them on a slide as the backdrop for their report. Instruct students how to cite or acknowledge the source of the photos.

Using their worksheet as a speaking prompt, students present a short oral report on their chosen bridge. Their report should begin with their rhetorical question, list three details about the bridge and then conclude with a one sentence summary. Students then link their chosen images to the bridge.

# Amazing Bridges Summary and Research Sheet

Complete the table to summarise the article *Will Wonders Never Cease: The Q'eswachaka Bridge* and when researching your own bridge.

Text title:	
Three important details about the topic:	
Main idea ( <i>written as a rhetorical question</i> ):	
Three key words from the main idea:	
One sentence summary of the topic:	

# A Mouse's Advice for the Poet

poem by Beverly McLoughland | illustrated by David Legge

**Worksheet:** Comparing Characters

**Engaging Critically**  
ACELT1602 | EN2-10C

**Explore** typical representations of animals in literary texts.

Prior to reading the poem, explain to students that mice are one of the most popular types of animals to appear in literature. Brainstorm a list of texts that feature a mouse as a main character. Answers may include: the Tom and Jerry cartoons by Hanna Barbera, The Gruffalo / The Gruffalo's Child by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, and Stuart Little by E.B. White.

Read/view a range of picture books about mice. Two possible texts are:

- [The Wolf, the Duck and the Mouse](#) by Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen
- [Little Mouse's Big Breakfast](#) by Christine Pym

After exploring a range of texts about mice complete the Comparing Characters worksheet. Using the list of similarities as inspiration, write a list of advice for authors planning to write a text about mice. (Suggested topics could include: love of food – particularly cheese, fear of predators such as cats and foxes, living alongside humans, fond of creature comforts).

Read the poem. After reading, compare the text of the poem to the class's list of advice. Match the topics covered both in the poem and the class list and identify new ideas raised by the mouse (handsome whiskers, a desire to be alone, a favourite cheese).

Utilising the school library and online resources, provide students with a range of texts about another animal, such as a cat. Some suggested cat texts are:

- The Cat Who was an Empress by Simon Cooke (in this issue)
- Marmalade and Marmaduke by Sally Murphy (Count Down – Issue 5, 2020)
- [Macavity the Mystery Cat](#) by T.S. Eliot
- [Grumpy Cat](#) by Britta Teckentrup

Students independently compare three cat characters using the Comparing Characters worksheet. Using their worksheet as a scaffold, students then write their own list of advice to authors about how to write a story/poem/play about a cat.

# Comparing Characters

After reading three stories about an animal, compare the main characters.

ANIMAL ONE

ANIMAL TWO

ANIMAL THREE

DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES

DIFFERENCES

DIFFERENCES

# Miss Pipperman's Parrot

story by Jacqueline West | illustrated by Andrew Joyner

Engaging Critically  
ACELT1603 | EN2-11D

**Use** a reciprocal teaching strategy to facilitate higher order discussions about the story.

Read through the story without taking a break. Ask students to write a summary using the headings **Somebody Wanted But So Then**. Collect student summaries and store for later. Lead a class discussion about why it is challenging to write a summary of this story. (Students may observe that there are three characters who could be the 'somebody', there are many different events, there is a twist in at the end.) Explain to students that texts can be understood in more detail and enjoyed more thoroughly if you discuss your opinions and observations as you read.

Reread, using a reciprocal teaching strategy, adapted from Linda Hoyt's book **Revisit, Reflect, Retell**. This involves students breaking a text into chunks, pausing their reading and discussing what has been read. These discussions focus on four processes. Readers: predict, clarify, question and summarise their reading.

Divide students into groups of 3-4. Model how to chunk the text. (It may be easier to number the paragraphs, or to draw a line between chunks before providing it to students.) Suggested points to pause reading include:

At the end of paragraph one, "...said no to Miss Pipperman."
At the end of paragraph two, "...even more certain that she couldn't say no."
At the end of paragraph sixteen, "...just like an engine fading into the distance."
At the end of paragraph thirty-three, "...something mean about anyone. Ever."
At the end of paragraph forty-four, "She didn't find a thing."
At the end of paragraph fifty, "...retired jewel thieves."
At the end of paragraph seventy, "... a lot of rocks."
At the end of paragraph eighty, "...at that very moment."
At the story's conclusion.

Analyse the text using the following steps:

1. The discussion leader reads and leads a discussion on some of the *PREDICT* prompts (below).
2. The group reads the chunk of text, either aloud or silently.
3. They discuss the chunk for five minutes using some of the *CLARIFY*, *QUESTION* and *SUMMARISE* prompts. (Project a timer on the board to encourage students to self-regulate their learning.)
4. The discussion leader role rotates. The new leader reads the predict questions for the next chunk and repeats the sequence.

<p><b>Predict</b> <i>before reading</i></p> <p>Can you remember what happens next in the story?</p> <p>What do you think will happen next in the story?</p> <p>Is there a detail in this chunk that might be important later on?</p> <p>Are any of the characters hinting at something?</p>	<p><b>Clarify</b> <i>after reading</i></p> <p>Do any of the illustrations match this chunk of the story?</p> <p>Are there any interesting or unusual words you want to find the meaning of?</p> <p>Are there any difficult or confusing phrases you would like to discuss?</p> <p>Are there any events you would like to be explained?</p>
<p><b>Question</b> <i>after reading</i></p> <p>Were your predictions about this chunk correct?</p> <p>Are there any ideas or events that you found puzzling or important?</p> <p>What do we learn about Lydia/Romeo/Miss Pippeman in this chunk?</p>	<p><b>Summarise</b> <i>after reading</i></p> <p>What are the main events of the story so far?</p> <p>What are the main events in this chunk?</p> <p>What do we learn and what information are we given in this chunk?</p> <p>Where is this chunk set?</p> <p>What is the main idea/theme of this chunk?</p>

As students engage in small group discussion, circulate through the classroom and act as a participant, rather than group leader.

At the end of the reciprocal teaching cycle, students complete the Somebody Wanted But So Then strategy again. Return students' initial summary sheets and ask students to identify areas in which their summaries have become more accurate and detailed after engaging in group discussions about the story.

# Judgements on a character

Read the story. Use this worksheet to record quotes that show a judgment about Miss Pipperman that is made by either the author or one of the characters.

- If you think the judgment about Miss Pipperman is positive, put the letter P in the Positive/Negative column.
- If the judgement about Miss Pipperman is negative, put the letter N in the column.
- If the judgment is from the author/narrator, write the letter A in the Source column.
- If the judgement is from a character, write the letter C in the Source column.

Quote that shows a judgment being made about Miss Pipperman	Positive/ Negative	Source

Write your judgment of Miss Pipperman below. Include reasons (from the text and your own experiences) explaining why you feel that way.

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# A Jolly Good Pharaoh

play by Bill Condon | illustrated by Aska

## Experimenting

ACELT1606 | EN2-2A

**Explore** how puns add humour and playfulness to a text and experiment with word play on the topic of Ancient Egypt.

After reading the play, discuss with students its purpose: to entertain. Reread the play, highlighting lines of dialogue that are funny. Answers could include Hotpot's dismissive responses ("Tomorrow could be worse."), mentions of the Pharaoh's silly mistakes ("built a pyramid out of paper...") and the word play ("jolly good Pharaoh ... Hip-Hip-hurray!").

Explain to students that they are going to focus specifically on the author's use of puns to add humour to the story. Provide the definition of pun from the [Australian curriculum glossary](#): Humorous use of a word to bring out more than one meaning; a play on words. Then model explaining how individual examples of puns are playful and funny.

Step one: identify the word or words that are the basis of the joke. They are usually a homophone or a word that sounds incredibly similar to another word.

*For example:* pharaoh sounds similar to fellow.

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

*For example:* 'Jolly good fellow' is a song sung on people's birthdays. Jolly good Pharaoh is being sung on Hip-Hip's birthday.

Step three: Provide students with examples of puns from the website [Ancient Egypt Kids Jokes](#). Students select their favourite puns and using the steps above explain why these jokes are funny.

Step four: Explain to students that a common use of puns is in newspaper headlines. Challenge students to create puns for news headlines reporting on Hip-Hip's birthday. For example: Hip-Hip's birthday bash – no mummies invited! This could be turned into a class competition, ranking puns with a groan-o-meter.

**Extension:** Ask students to go on a 'pun hunt' in this edition of The School Magazine (starting with Tohby Riddle's cartoon on page 28). Ask students to use the first two steps to explain why the puns are funny.

# Surprise Party

poem by Darren Sardelli | illustrated by Cheryl Orsini

## Experimenting

ACELY1694 | EN2-2A

**Understand** the use of enjambment in poetry and experiment with the technique to create humorous stanzas in the style of *Surprise Party*.

Listen to the video performance of the poem if you are a digital subscriber or read the poem to the students if you are a print subscriber.

Provide students with a simple definition of enjambment: when a sentence or a clause continues across more than one line. Discuss the structure of *Surprise Party*. Each stanza has two enjambed lines and one end-stopped line. This is made obvious by the use of punctuation. Contrast enjambment with an end-stopped line, where a line ends with punctuation that closes the thought or phrase (use *Francesca Frog*, featured in *Blast Off – Issue 1 2020*, as an example).

Discuss reasons why a poet would use enjambment. Acknowledge and highlight answers that make the following observations:

- it encourages readers to continue reading from one line to the next;
- it enhances surprise in a poem by delaying meaning until the next line is read. For example, after reading the first line a reader is left wondering why the pineapple pancake is important. It is only after reading the next line that the reader feels surprise and amusement, upon reading that the pancake is unexpectedly pinned to a chin.

Explain to students that they will experiment with enjambment to add new stanzas to the poem.

Visit the website [Wheel Spinner Food](#). As a class, customise the food. Explain to students that the wheel will randomly allocate them two types of food. Then students must humorously describe how the food makes contact with the speaker. Their first two lines should be enjambed. The third line should be end-stopped.

Students perform their original stanzas of the poem, mimicking the reading style of the YouTube video. Students adapt Cheryl Orsini's illustration using a digital tool (such as Adobe Fresco or Microsoft Paint 3D) to include details from their original stanza. Using their new illustration, they re-record the poem on an iPad and publish on a collaborative platform such as Google classroom.

# Know your gnomes?

Read the article 'Hey! Who's That in the Garden?' and answer the following questions. Not all of the answers can be found in the text. Use your head!

1. Where might you find garden gnomes?

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2. What are some of the hobbies that garden gnomes have?

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3. What was the main reason for producing inexpensive gnomes?

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4. Do you think that the GLF really cared about the freedom of gnomes? Why / why not?

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5. Whisking stolen gnomes away was known as 'gnomenapping'. Can you think a different term?

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6. Why do you think gnomes are no longer found in 'fancy' gardens?

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7. This article has a catchy title. Can you think of a different title that might grab a reader's attention?

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