

Stumped

Poem by Jackie Hosking | illustrated by [Aśka](#)

ACELA1512 | EN3-6B

Analyse how vocabulary is used to make meaning in a text.

Introduce the poem by reading only the title. Students do a think, pair, share, predicting what the poem will be about. Have a student use a dictionary or the [Merriam-Webster learners dictionary](#) to find various definitions for the word “stump” (a part remaining from something that has fallen off, a part of a tree that has been cut down, to be too difficult to answer). Discuss with the class if anyone has changed their minds on what the poem is about.

Show students the illustration to go with the poem. Discuss what they think the poem is about now.

Read the poem and discuss the following:

- What is the poem about?
- What happened to the narrator?
- How does the title “Stumped” relate to the poem? (The narrator hit a tree stump and fell off the bike, the narrator landed on a second stump, the narrator was “stumped” by the fall.)
- Do you think this is a good title for the poem? Why/Why not?
- What could be another title for this poem?

Inform students that when a word is spelt and said the same but has two different meanings, that word is a homonym. If you have a digital subscription, complete the interactive activity “Homonyms”. Brainstorm other homonyms (e.g. bark, bank, note, saw, letter).

Students then create a short piece of writing (either paragraph or poem depending on skill level) based on a homonym mix up. They start the piece of writing as if they’re talking about one meaning of the homonym, but the twist is they’re talking about the other meaning.

A poem example:

I thought I was better,
I confused all my letters,
My writing is bad,
It makes me feel sad,
But now it's all sorted,
I haven't been thwarted,
The mailbox I went,
The letters are sent!

A paragraph example:

It was a scary bat. Black, streamlined – I swear, it was glaring at me, even as it lay innocently on the grass. I held my breath as I tiptoed towards it. I was going to have to pick it up eventually. It was only when the umpire yelled at me to stop wasting time that I scooped up the bat and faced the pitcher.