

Will Wonders Never Cease? The Vienna Vegetable Orchestra

Article by Zoë Disher | photo by Alamy

Worksheet: **Comprehension questions**

Understanding

ACELT1606 | EN2-2A

Create neologisms to describe sounds.

Identify the neologisms in the text (e.g. the pumpkin drum, carrot recorder or the cucumberphone). Suggest how each of these items may look (e.g. a drum made from a pumpkin, a recorder created from hollowing out a carrot and either a phone encased in a cucumber or a cucumber attached to an amplifier, acting as a microphone). Highlight how when neologisms are a compound word, such as cucumberphone, understanding of the individual words, 'cucumber,' and, 'phone,' assists when striving to identify the meaning of the new word.

Examine examples of neologisms in other texts. Roald Dahl was a firm fan of making up words. Check out the article, [Roald Dahl: the best gobblefunk words](#) for some great examples of his neologisms, for example, biffsquiggled (when your brain feels muddled and Froboscottle (a green fizzy drink, drunk by giants). Attempt to guess the meanings of the words, before reading the explanation. Again, search for individual words within compound words to assist with deciphering meaning.

Generate a series of sounds, for example, by stomping your feet, banging the wall with a ruler etc. Create words for each of the sounds (e.g. foomper, combining 'foot' and 'stomper' and waller, combining 'wall' and 'ruler'). Record these in a class neologism dictionary. Provide bonus points for anyone who uses the words in context throughout the day as an example of a competition.

Connecting

ACELY1692 | EN2-4A

Analyse articles by the same author and experiment with adapting tone to suit the subject matter.

Identify humor in the text (e.g. lines such as, "Inside every carrot is a recorder waiting to be heard," "The Vienna Vegetable Orchestra has been playing with food since 1998—playing music, that is!" and, "After all, when it comes to vegetable instruments, if you can't beat them—eat them.").

Read *Will Wonders Never Cease? Martians attack New York*, in *Blast Off!* issue 2, highlighting that it is also written by Zoë Disher. Again, search for examples of humor (there aren't any!).

Share suggestions of reasons for the difference in style adopted by the writer (i.e. humor has been omitted from the *Martians* text as the subject matter is more serious, humor may seem in poor taste when outlining the distress resulting from the radio broadcast etc.).

View an episode of [Behind the News](#), noting how the tone is adapted to suit the subject matter, ranging from more serious for hard news to jokey and cheery for more light-hearted topics.

Create news reports on events in your school (e.g. sports matches, writing competitions etc.), adapting the style to suit the subject matter. Record these using video software in character as news anchors.

Engaging Critically

ACELA1793 | EN2-8B

Investigate the Vegetable Orchestra's website, noting similarities and differences between the digital information and the printed text.

Analyse the text, identifying elements that assist with navigation (headings, sub-headings, images, etc.). Next, analyse the [Vegetable Orchestra's website](#), again noting anything that assists with navigating information (e.g. the drop down menu top left, extending to further options under each heading, detailed information organised under the headings in each section, images that scroll across the page etc.).

Formulate a conclusion of when each type of text might be most useful (e.g. for a brief introduction to a topic an article may work best, however when conducting more detailed research a website could be most useful). Generate questions about the styles of music that are mentioned as being inspirational for the members of the orchestra (jazz, classical and electronic beats). For example: what sound typifies each genre of music, what instruments are used to create each style, what are some of the well-known artists of each type etc. Conduct research into these questions using websites. Use the information to write a brief article, using similar features to the text for aiding navigation (e.g. headings, sub-headings, images etc.).

Experimenting

ACELT1603 | EN2-11D

Create a review, featuring subjective language.

Identify subjective language in the text (e.g. "might seem funny," "takes its music very seriously," "an amazing variety of sounds," and "after all, when it comes to vegetable instruments, if you can't beat them—eat them!").

Read the reviews section of the [Vegetable Orchestra's website](#). Highlight subjective language featured in these reviews, such as: "most lovely release indeed," "And it's dynamic,"

“the Green Album shows the Vegetable Orchestra at its most comedic,” etc. Create instruments from junk materials. You can find some great ideas on [Felt Magnet](#).

Compose a musical piece to perform to another group. Create reviews of each other’s performances and include subjective language.

[ACELY1688 | EN2-1A](#)

Generate questions for analysing individual responses to music.

Listen to a recording of the music, on the [Vegetable Orchestra’s website](#). Generate questions to consider when analysing music (e.g. what does the music make you think of? how does it make you feel? Do you enjoy the music? Why/why not? etc.).

In groups, share responses to each of the questions. Formulate a summary of the main opinions, based on the responses from your group.

Comprehension questions

Read 'The Vienna Vegetable Orchestra' and answer the following questions in full sentences, using information from the text to support your responses.

1. How long have the Vienna Vegetable Orchestra been playing with food for?

2. Explain why the carrot recorder would be more complicated than the pumpkin drum.

3. What sounds do the vegetable creations make?

4. Why don't the instruments last very long?

5. Why do you think it takes so long to make one of these vegetable instruments?

6. Would you buy one of the Vienna Vegetable Orchestra's albums? Explain why or why not.

Twin Time

Story by Janeen Brian | illustrated by Aśka

Worksheet: **Apostrophes**

Understanding

[ACELT1605 | EN2-10C](#)

Develop well-known villains, using empathy to make them more endearing to readers.

Identify instances when you feel empathy for the characters (e.g. you sympathise with Jimmy when his hopes of seeing inventions first-hand are dashed, you perhaps empathise with Simi when she is uncomfortable about having her nappy checked etc.). Highlight how creating empathy for your characters makes readers care about their choices. Identify other ways the author encourages you to support and like Simi and Jimmy (the characters are around your age, you can relate to their desire to travel through time and you feel sorry for them when they are thrust into a time zone that appears inescapable).

Consider villains from well-known texts, e.g. the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood or Mr. and Mrs. Twit from The Twits. Suggest ways to endear these characters more to readers (e.g. by describing the wolf's disappointment after failing a test at wolf school or with Mr. Twit being talked down to by his mum, with her claiming he is too weak and should be meaner). Create brief paragraphs to add to their stories and share these in groups. Reflect on the impact this new information has on the reader's impression of the characters.

Connecting

[ACELT1602 | EN2-10C](#)

Create a video record that reflects on individual experiences students may have of relationships between friends and siblings.

Suggest areas for consideration when reflecting on relationships with friends or siblings (e.g. how you get along, what you have in common, what activities you have a shared passion for etc.). Consider the relationship between the twins in the text using these suggestions as a guide (e.g. they bicker and argue often, they have a mutual interest in time travel but would prefer to visit very different time periods, they share a passion for inventing etc.). Apply the same criteria to the friends in the poem Twins, also in this issue of Blast Off! (they get along well, like 'mac and cheese', they both like comics and they enjoy painting and making a mess).

Consider relationships in your life and examine them using the same ideas as earlier. Create brief videos, recording your feelings about the relationship, directly to camera. Compile all the videos into an extended piece on relationships. The recording can be used for stimulus when developing relationships between characters in texts.

Engaging Critically

ACELA1496 | EN2-8B

Analyse the composition and framing of the images, suggesting reasons for the choices made by illustrators.

View the accompanying images, paying close attention to the positions the characters are shown from, e.g. at eye level, above eye level or below eye level. Highlight how the composition of the images, showing the characters from specific angles, is done deliberately to communicate a message (e.g. showing the twins in the first and final images mostly at eye level orientates the viewer to the scene and the characters, composing the second image below eye level, accentuates the importance of that button with the twins looming ominously above, illustrating the third image from above eye level, the mum's face covered, places the focus firmly on the twins and drawing the fourth image from above, accentuates how small and young the twins are as they crawl along the floor).

Repeat this process with the images that accompany the text, *A Devil Under the Bed*, Countdown issue 4, 2020, created by the same illustrator (e.g. with image two shown from below eye level, emphasizing the brother with his ear to the ground, and showing the parents towering above him, image four being shown level with the devils, omitting Lucy's face from the image as the devils are the focus of the image etc.).

Create photos of characters pretending to use a new invention. Invent a new product, perhaps a candy machine that hangs from your head, dropping lollies into your mouth or a swimming pool blaster that creates a swimming pool wherever you point it. Consider which feature you most wish to emphasise in the image and take this into account when deciding the best angles to shoot the characters from. For example, if you wish to accentuate the power of the machine, show it in the foreground at eye level, with the characters below eye level etc.

Experimenting

ACELT1794 | EN2-2A

Create a digital story, incorporating information about an invention encountered in research.

Highlight how Jimmy wishes to go back in time to see the inventions that have changed the world ("the printing press, and the first flying machine and the catapults they used to invade castles"). Identify further examples of ground-breaking inventions (e.g. the wheel, the motor vehicle or the personal computer). Research information about an invention of choice, using the internet and books.

Collaboratively plot a brief script, about the twins travelling back in time and observing the ground-breaking invention occurring. Include the public's reaction to the invention. For an example of a script, students could examine the play *Mr. Belzoni and the Pyramid*, featured in this issue of *Blast Off!* Film the story, using video recording software and share examples.

Develop a story, using the description of the setting to orientate the reader.

Identify descriptions of settings when the twins have travelled to different stages in their lives (e.g. “They were both lying in a double pram. In a room; in a house. And Jimmy was sucking on a dummy,” and, “Gingerly, the pair stepped outside—into an aged care home filled with elderly people sitting in chairs around the room. Jimmy was bent over, clutching a mobility walker and Simi was in a wheelchair, a rug over her lap”). Highlight how the descriptions of the settings are included, prior to explicitly stating what has happened (e.g. through lines such as, “The machine has taken us back in time. Now we’re babies!” and, “The time machine’s taken us into the future!’ Jimmy’s suddenly creaky voice was full of despair.”).

Suggest clues that might be visible if the twins were taken to another stage in their lives, such as when they are students at high school (e.g. textbooks everywhere, a bus travel pass on the counter, make-up or a sports jacket lying around etc.). Develop the story, describing where the twins travel to another stage in their lives. Include the description of the setting prior to explicitly stating the stage the twins have travelled to (e.g. I nearly tripped over a stack of textbooks, precariously balanced, with a palette of eye shadow and bus pass wobbling on top).

Apostrophes

Read 'Twin Time'. In the second column, write whether it is an apostrophe of **contraction** (replacing missing letters, often combining two words into one) or **possession** (telling that something belongs to the noun followed by an apostrophe + s). In the final column write the meaning of the word.

The first one has been done for you.

Word	Contraction/ Possession	Meaning
Simi's	possession	belonging to Simi

Write two sentences. Use an apostrophe of contraction and an apostrophe of possession in each sentence, for example, *Jimmy didn't like mum's spinach and broccoli mash.*

1. _____

2. _____

Visiting Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie

Story by Philippa Werry | illustrated by Peter Sheehan

Worksheet: **Exploring verbs of speech**

Connecting
ACELT1602 | EN2-10C

Draw connections between the ironic style of humour used by different authors.

Identify how the father is described at the end of the text (“his voice rattled like cups and saucers in an earthquake,” and feeling worn out and needing a lie down after the visit, in the same way he had predicted Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie would feel during the visit). Highlight the humour in him behaving in this manner, informing students we call this irony.

Read *Twin Time*, also found in this issue of *Blast Off!* Search for irony in the ending (the twins ending up in a home for the elderly, being served the pear juice they were so keen to escape when they were transformed into babies).

Finally, read *What a Pickle*, also found in this issue, and search for irony in the text (after spending so much time washing, the pickle ended his days in a salad amongst unwashed lettuce).

Consider traits that other characters could be obsessive about, e.g. being incredibly neat, becoming irritated by lateness etc. Create a story where despite their best efforts, the characters end up in the very situation they are desperate to escape. Perhaps a story about an obsessively neat character, who cannot stand sharing a room with their messy older sibling. They plot and scheme until they convince their parents to send them away for the summer, only to find themselves roommates with a cousin who is even messier. Create role plays, outlining what the character is desperate to avoid, how they strive to escape it and the ironic situation they end up in.

Engaging Critically

ACELA1496 | EN2-8B

Analyse images, identifying the point of view and experiment with portraying scenes from alternate points of view.

Highlight the way Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie is portrayed in image two (sat alone, in a dimly lit room, watching the television, seemingly lonely and weak or incapable). Consider which character's point of view this demonstrates (the dad's). Contrast this with image three and four where Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie is shown climbing a tree and playing cricket, seeming full of life, agile and fun-loving. Emphasise that these images show how Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie is in reality. View the images that accompany Jack and the Beanstalk, also from this issue of Blast Off! as an additional example. Highlight that Jack is shown from the giant's point of view, exhibiting facial expressions that make him appear sneaky and conniving.

Create a brief role-play, portraying an argument, either real or fictitious. Freeze in positions to show the scene from both alternate points of view. For example, illustrate an argument relating to a sibling breaking something that belongs to you. The sibling may claim it was an accident but you may be convinced they broke the item on purpose. Demonstrate these alternate points of view, firstly by freezing showing the person who broke the item looking upset and then in the second freeze, show the sibling laughing, appearing to break the item deliberately.

Experimenting

ACELT1607 | EN2-10C

Create a video, featuring expectations that are very different from reality.

Identify the expectations each of the characters in the text have prior to the visit (e.g. the dad is worried Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie will find the visit tiring and is keen for his children to remain on their best behaviour, the children may think the visit might be boring while Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie is excited to have visitors). Highlight that Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie is full of energy and entertains her guests, which is very different from both the dad's and the children's' expectations.

Consider an event where the reality was vastly different to your expectation (e.g. imagining no one would visit on your birthday then a huge number of people arriving to pass on their best wishes). Identify your reaction to events not turning out as you expected (either with the surprise being a pleasant one or something unwelcome such as a friend surprising you by treating you unfairly). Create a brief video, role-playing both the expectation and then the reality.

Reflecting

ACELY1692 | EN2-4A

Reflect on learning, considering how visuals aid comprehension.

Plot the relationship between the characters in the text and Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie, e.g. with her being the children's great grandparent's sibling. Create a family tree of people in your family. Attempt to trace back as far as you can, setting the challenge of tracing back to include as many 'greats' in the family members titles as possible.

Consider whether plotting the family members on a visual representation assisted with comprehension of the concept. Highlight how often visual learners in particular are assisted with comprehension through visuals. Encourage students to reflect on how, at least in part, they may or may not be visual learners. Consider how this could assist students with their learning in the future (e.g. searching for diagrams or plotting visuals to assist with subject matter they find challenging to comprehend).

Exploring verbs of speech

Record the verbs of speech from the story 'Visiting Great-Great-Great Aunt Louie'. What's your opinion about the use of this verb in the sentence—does it add interest, or is it too distracting?

Saying verbs	Is this a successful way to show how this was said?
said	Yes—it lets the reader focus on the words, not the way the character says it.

Now come up with some of your own!

Saying verbs	Information about emotion, mood or sound

Write a short conversation. Use some of the saying words from the tables above. Remember to put quotation marks around only the words that are being spoken.

What a Pickle

Poem by Geoffrey McSkimming | illustrated by David Legge

Worksheet: **Using the Rule of Three**

Understanding

ACELA1495 | EN2-9B

Create a game requiring players to use different types of adverb groups/phrases.

Identify adverb groups/phrases in the text (e.g. “bathe every day in a regular way,” “woken fresh from their slumbers,” and, “You make such a din every time you jump into your bathtub”). Highlight how adverb groups/phrases give more information about the time, place or manner in which the action took place. Sort each of the adverb groups/phrases identified under these headings (e.g. time and manner for the first example above, time for the second, and manner and place for the final example).

Create a game with the adverb groups/phrases. For example, you could have a fastest fingers first, selecting a verb at random and using a spinner to select the type of adverb group/phrase (either time, place or manner) you wish students to create. Instruct students to create an adverb group/phrase in the fastest possible time.

Provide students with access to a range of materials, useful for creating games. Instruct students to create their own game, featuring adverb groups/phrases of each of the three types explored.

Connecting

ACELY1692 | EN2-4A

Create a text to communicate the same main idea as demonstrated in the text.

Identify the main desire of the pickle (to be clean). Highlight that this seems unusual to the other pickles, and based on their reaction is a unique way for a pickle to behave. Consider the lengths the pickle went to, to achieve this (washing regularly). Locate information, detailing how the pickle ended up (mixed in a salad with unwashed lettuce and gritty dates). Identify the main idea of the text (that you can't change the course of your fate).

Consider the main idea, that you cannot alter the course of your fate. Share opinions on whether students agree or disagree with this, providing examples for each point of view (e.g. studying hard to improve your grades is one way you can change your fate or finding the same subjects challenging at school as your parents or siblings did, for the opposing view). Suggest examples of stories to express this point of view (e.g. a dog character working hard to become a guide dog despite its parents never being accepted into the program). Create a digital story, communicating your idea. You could use PowerPoint, including text, visuals and

audio to communicate your idea. Cut and paste images found on Google and audio files found on search engines such as [Find Sounds](#).

Engaging Critically

ACELT1603 | EN2-11D

Create a class rap, outlining opinions of the pickle’s mindset and the experiences that shape our world view.

Identify character traits of both the pickle who washes daily (he doesn’t care if anyone sees him, he is determined to wash each day and is not put off by the other pickles’ reactions) and the other pickles (they are irritated by noise).

Suggest arguments that defend the pickle who bathes (e.g. he could be seen as being hygienic, as someone who takes pride in himself and someone who is not afraid to stand up for what he believes in). Next consider the alternative view (that he is inconsiderate, superficial and as having a blatant disregard for other peoples’ feelings). Repeat this process for the other pickles, first in support of their position (e.g. they are deserving of sympathy, due to constantly having their rest interrupted because of someone else’s selfishness) and then against their choice (e.g. they could be seen as dogmatic, inflexible and unsympathetic to the bathing pickle’s needs).

Identify which of these interpretations you identify with. Consider what may have influenced this position (e.g. have you suffered a similar fate, with an inconsiderate sibling or do you feel misunderstood when others act in a way you interpret as being inflexible). Create a verse for a rap – you could use the [Song lyrics generator](#) as an example for students to use as one method to create a rap. Students outline their position and any experience that may have influenced it. Encourage students to follow the same rhyming pattern as in the text, with second and fourth lines rhyming. Compile the stanzas into a class rap and record it, with each individual student performing their verse.

Experimenting

ACELT1603 | EN2-11D

Create immersive theatrical scenes, using body language and facial expressions to express opinions on the pickle’s behaviour.

Highlight how clearly the characters opinions about the pickle’s bathing habits are expressed through their facial expressions in the illustration (e.g. with the other pickles disgusted, shown by their open mouths, folded arms and viewing the scene through their glasses pulled down while the chilies are encouraging the pickle, which is demonstrated through their raised fist and smiling faces).

Share a series of statements relating to the behaviour of the pickle, such as: it is important to respect the feelings of others, you should always be true to yourself regardless of what others think and it is impossible to change the course of your fate. Instruct students to express their opinions of these statements, responding using only their body language and facial expressions to share their opinions. Create a corridor of performers, with students standing on both sides of a walkway. Read each of the statements and instruct students to move into the position they have chosen for expressing their opinion. Take it in turns to walk through the middle of the students, in the style of [immersive theatre](#). As you walk, strive to identify each of the students' opinions.

Using the rule of three

The rule of three is a writing pattern where three words are used to create a rhythm in a text.

Part A

Select the sentences that use the rule of three:

1. So proud of his green, shiny skin.
2. The shelf full of cucumbers, gherkins and chillis.
3. I will splish and splash and wash myself clean.

Part B

Create your own sentence for each of the following set of three:

1. stop, look and listen

2. cold, dark and creepy

Part C

Come up with your own rule of three for the following ideas and use them in sentences:

1. three song titles

2. three words to describe members of your family
