

Meet the Countdown Crew

EN2-1A | ACELY1792

Experiment with composing a report by interviewing fellow students.

Discuss the information included on each of the crew. Invite students to suggest headings the information could be sorted under. Sample answers include: 'type of animal/appearance', 'role/job on the SS Webweaver', 'passions/interests', 'early life'. Use these headings to collaboratively sort the information about the character Ahab.

Instruct students to work in pairs, sorting the information about the remaining characters. Sample responses are provided in the table:

Character	Type of animal/appearance	Role on the SS Webweaver	Passions/interests	Early life
Ahab	a spider the size of a dinner plate	captain	surfs the net to find words and ideas to share with Countdown readers	raised in the Orinoco Delta in South America
Bob	otter	odd jobs and first mate	fixing broken things	
Shasta	broilga	very capable sailor	adores stories and wordplay, loves reading, creative cook and experiments with recipes	

Share information about yourself, that could be sorted under each of the headings identified earlier. For example, include a description of your appearance, information about your role as a teacher, examples of your passions and interests and a summary of your early life, such as where you grew up.

Place students in groups. Inform them they will be interviewing their peers to obtain information for a 'meet the class' article. Tell students to use the headings identified earlier to guide the types of questions they ask their peers. Inform students that they can add additional headings if required.

Outline the roles required for this task, for example, group leader, interviewee, interviewer, note taker and reporter. Briefly discuss what each of these roles entail, for example:

- group leader - encourages other group members to stay on task and oversees collaboration and problem solving
- interviewee – the person being asked the questions
- interviewer – the person asking the questions
- note taker – making notes on what the interviewee shares
- reporter – organising notes into a written or oral display of the information gathered

Tell students to rotate roles, so they each have a turn on a task. Students can share the information they gather in a written format, following a similar layout to that used in the magazine. Alternatively, students could prepare oral reports, acting as reporters to share the information. These could be recorded using video recording software.

Success criteria:

- Works collaboratively to gather information about their peers
- Includes a range of information in a written or oral report

A Pickle Indeed!

story by [Geoffrey McSkimming](#) | illustrated by [Douglas Holgate](#)

[EN2-4A](#) | [ACELY1679](#)

Experiment with using context to identify the meaning of unknown words.

Display the following sentences:

- I put my winklepickers on my feet before leaving home, but I need to be very careful not to prick myself with their toes.
- I xertz my water because I was so thirsty.

Place students in groups. Set a timer for two minutes and instruct them to discuss potential meanings for the unfamiliar words ('winklepickers' and 'xertz'). Share responses, discussing the strategies students used to identify potential meanings.

Emphasise that using the rest of the information in the sentence often provides insight into the meaning of unfamiliar words. Tell students if they haven't already deduced this, that 'winklepickers' are shoes with pointy shoes and 'xertz' means to gulp a drink quickly or greedily.

Read the first part of the story on page 6. Identify unfamiliar words such as:

- spregnockit
- confounded

Discuss the context for each, using the following lines from the text:

Bob the odd-job otter of the SS Webweaver was having trouble with his spregnockit. 'Ooh, you confounded little item,' he muttered at it as he tinkered at the Webweaver's engine.

Guide students towards using the clue:

tinkered at the Webweaver's engine

to identify that the spregnockit has something to do with the engine, and conclude that it is most likely a mechanical part.

Emphasize that the character is clearly frustrated in that extract, which implies 'confounded' means expressing anger or annoyance.

Place students in pairs. Provide them with post-it-notes. Instruct them to continue reading the story with their partner. Tell them to label any unfamiliar words they encounter with their

potential meanings. Sample words that may be identified include: tinkering, wonky, shipshape, sultry.

Share responses. Discuss how context allows students to identify the meaning of the words listed above. Sample responses are provided below:

The line:

Fixer of All Things Broken and Wonky

implies 'tinkering' has something to do with fixing. The same line, reveals wonky is similar to broken.

The line:

He only ever muttered at bits of the engine when things weren't working in a shipshape fashion

reveals the character becomes frustrated when things don't work properly, which implies 'shipshape' has something to do with things working properly.

The line:

on this hot and sultry afternoon

emphasizing the use of the conjunction 'and' implies 'sultry' is similar to hot.

Discuss how part one of the story ends (with a giant tentacle that may belong to the feared Guardian of the Gherkins, rolling through the waves). Discuss what might happen in part two. Sample ideas include: that the Guardian of the Gherkins attacks the SS Webweaver or that it transpires the tentacle belongs to a friendly creature.

Inform students that they will be continuing the story, by composing part 2.

View the article [7 Weird Words in the English Language](#) on CBC Kids. Model selecting one of the words in the article such as 'bumfuzzle' and using it in a sentence where the context provides insight the word's meaning. For example:

I bumfuzzled the creature, so it had no idea which way the boat was travelling, which allowed us to escape with the SS Webweaver.

Instruct students to work with a partner, continuing the story and using unfamiliar words from the article in their sentences.

Success criteria

- Continues the story
- Uses unfamiliar words in sentences

Captain Ahab's Weird Wide World: Wow, What a Song!

article by Karen Jameyson | photo by Dreamstime

EN2-6B | ACELY1677

Experiment with using a storyboard to plan a multimedia presentation.

Display the sub-headings included in the article:

- Tra la! Tra la!
- Many happy returns
- It's out of this world

Discuss the information included under each sub-heading. Sample responses are provided in the table below.

Tra la! Tra la!	Many happy returns	It's out of this world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • background information such as the popularity of the song around the world and the occasions when the song is sung 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • origins of the song • how it became associated with birthdays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interesting facts: that the song has been sung in space

As a modelled activity, tell students you are wishing to create a presentation on the subject matter featured in the article. Inform students that they will be creating their own presentation in groups later. Discuss visual and audio elements that could accompany the information from the article, to create an interesting and interactive presentation. Some ideas include the following: adding audio of the song, including a video of people signing the song to each other and showing photos of the crew on space mission Apollo 9.

Inform students that storyboards are often used when planning ideas. Display a four-frame storyboard similar to the one shown below.

Write one of the following four headings in each frame:

- introduction
- background information
- origins of the song and how it came to be associated with birthdays
- interesting facts

Discuss which audio and visual elements would best suit each section of the presentation. Model noting these in the chosen section of the storyboard. A sample response is provided in the storyboard:

<p>Introduction – introduce the presenters and share the topic of the presentation.</p> <p>Visual: photo of the students who are making the presentation, standing around an image of a birthday cake.</p>	<p>Information: popularity of the song around the world.</p> <p>Background: when the song is sung.</p> <p>Audio: play audio of the song being sung.</p>
<p>Information: origins of the song and how it became associated with birthdays.</p> <p>Video: insert video of children singing the song while clustered around a cake.</p>	<p>Information: interesting facts: that the song has been sung in space</p> <p>Visual: photo of the crew on space mission Apollo 9.</p>

Place students in groups. Inform students that they will be researching Songlines, and their significance to First Australians. Tell students that they'll be presenting their findings in a presentation.

Allow time for students to research the topic, using the sites below:

[What are songlines](#)

[Songlines explained: A 360 experience with Rhoda Roberts](#)

[The songlines](#)

[Gujingga Songline](#)

Instruct students to plan their presentation, using the four-frame storyboard modelled earlier.

Tell students to aim to include a variety of sources to make their presentations interesting including, visuals, audio and video.

Students can use their storyboards to guide them with creating a brief multi-media presentation, using programs such as PowerPoint or Google Slides.

Duck Luck

poem by David Hill | illustrated by [David Legge](#)

[EN2-2A](#) | [ACELT1791](#)

Compose a poem adopting the style of the poet, by experimenting with repeating key words.

Identify the repeated words in the poem ('duck' and 'truck'). Inform students that writers usually try to avoid repeating the same word too often. Discuss why the poet may have chosen to repeat these words. Sample answers include, for rhythm, for emphasis, to create a distinct style.

Identify the words the poet has used to rhyme with both 'duck' and 'truck': 'shucks' (for the plural 'trucks'), 'cluck', 'luck', 'bucks' (for the plural 'ducks'). Emphasize that some lines feature the words 'duck' and 'truck' but end with other words, to provide variation.

Select the name of an animal at random, either by using a [digital spinner](#) or a paper based method, such as placing the names of animals in a hat for students to choose from. Identify rhyming words for the animal selected. Examples might include: 'sat' and 'mat' for a cat, or 'log' and 'bog' for dog. Students might find using a [rhyming dictionary](#) helpful for this. Note the animal and the rhyming words to use in a modelled poem.

Emphasize that the poet in Duck Luck included a vehicle in the poem (a truck). Discuss types of vehicles and collaboratively select one to feature in the modelled poem, for example, 'boat' or 'car'. Again identify as many rhyming words as possible for the selected vehicle. Examples include: 'moat' and 'coat' for boat, and 'bar' and 'far' for car.

Identify the rhyming pattern in the poem (rhyming couplets). Ensure students are aware that rhyming couplets are pairs of lines with the last word of each rhyming. Collaboratively compose as many couplets as possible, featuring the selected animal and vehicle. Sample answers might include:

There was a small cat,
Who lingered on a mat.

He tried to climb in a boat,
But slipped on his coat.

It wasn't the fault of the cat,
Instead it was because he sat.

If only he has built a moat,
Then his boat would have been sure to float.

Place students in small groups. Instruct them to follow the method modelled above, selecting an animal and a vehicle and identifying rhyming words, to compose a brief poem.

Success criteria

- Identifies rhyming words for an animal and a vehicle
- Composes a poem featuring rhyming couplets using the rhyming words

Caterpillar's Dream

poem by Beverly McLoughland | illustrated by Matt Ottley

EN2-2A | ACELT1601

Construct a brief role-play by developing ideas presented in a poem.

Discuss the caterpillar's views about the changes it encounters as it transitions into a butterfly. Sample answers include: it doesn't believe it is changing and cannot seem to accept what is happening, it does not understand the new world it finds itself in, where it is suddenly able to fly.

Read or show students a video read-aloud of the book, [Clark the Shark](#).

Discuss the challenges Sid the Squid encounters when he transitions to the school in the story. Discuss the support Clark the Shark provides (he becomes Sid the Squid's friend and guides him through the new world, explaining the rules and expectations). Emphasize how well placed Clark the Shark is for this role, having also found it challenging to adhere to the rules and expectations at the school initially.

Discuss how the butterfly in the poem may benefit from having someone guide them through the changes that are happening to them.

Discuss who might best suit this role. Sample ideas might include, a young butterfly who has recently gone through a similar transition, or a teacher butterfly, in a similar way to how teacher Mrs. Inkydink helped Clark the Shark follow the school rules.

Select a student to act as the new butterfly. Model role-playing an interaction between the chosen guide and the new butterfly.

A sample extract of dialogue is provided below:

Butterfly: I can't fly.

Guide: I know it feels scary, but you can do it. I can teach you.

Butterfly: OK, if you are sure I can do it.

Guide: Beat your wings and feel the wind this makes.

Butterfly: I'm nervous but I'll give it a go.

Guide: When you feel comfortable, try lifting up one of your legs, then the other. Remember to keep flapping your wings.

Butterfly: I'm scared! OK, I'll try. Wow, I'm doing it. I'm flying.

Guide: Yes, you are. Well done. You're a butterfly now and you are free to fly wherever your heart desires.

Place students in pairs and instruct them to compose their own role-play, with one character guiding the butterfly as it adapts to its new identity. Students can record their role-plays using video recording software or note them down as dialogue for a brief play.

Success criteria

- Creates a role-play between two characters
- Includes a character to guide the caterpillar as it transitions to a butterfly
- Features dialogue between the two characters

Superpowers of a Dragon

story by Deborah Bower | illustrated by Greg Holfeld

EN2-4A | ACELY1679

Composes speech bubbles to create a graphic story.

Discuss the way the other characters react when Daisy tells them she is a dragon (they don't believe her, as they think dragons live in caves, that they can fly, and that they breathe fire).

Examine the accompanying illustrations and discuss how they relate to the stages of the story. Discuss ideas for speech bubbles that could be added to the images of characters, to adapt the illustrations into a graphic story. Sample answers are included in the table below:

Image number, in the order they appear in the magazine	What is shown in the image	Ideas for speech bubbles
1	Daisy excitedly preparing for her day at school	Daisy saying: I hope I make some friends at my new school
2	Daisy looking sad when the other students assume she isn't a real dragon	The other students saying: You can't be a real dragon, you don't live in a cave, you cannot fly and you don't breathe fire.
3	Professor Pauline Platypus talking to the students, explaining that Daisy is a real dragon	Professor Pauline Platypus saying: Australia has over seventy species of dragon. None of those dragons breathe fire, live in caves or fly.
4	The echidna spilling water and looking upset	Elly the echidna saying: Arrggghh, my water has spilt everywhere.
5	Daisy absorbing the water through her feet, helping the other students	Daisy saying: Don't worry, I can clean that water up. I can absorb it through my feet.

Discuss other animals that differ from their namesake, such as the seahorse. Discuss ways the sea horse differs from a regular horse:

- they don't have hair or a mane
- they can't jump
- they don't live in a stable

Show students information about sea horses, such as the article [Seahorse Facts](#) found on National Geographic for Kids. Discuss seahorses' unique features, such as: they use their curly tail to grip onto weeds, they are covered in tiny spiny plates and that they swim in an upright position.

Place students in groups and tell them to select one of these special features. Tell students they'll be composing a story about other creatures dismissing a sea horse for not being what they consider is a real horse, before realising it has the special feature.

Discuss story ideas, showing the seahorse in an unfamiliar situation, such as at a new school, at an unfamiliar playground or at a celebration where they do not know many of the guests. Model using the headings below to support planning. Sample answers have been provided:

- Location: an unfamiliar underwater playground
- Assumption made by the other characters: that horses can jump
- Superpower: using its tail to grip onto weeds and plants
- How the seahorse helps the other characters with its superpower: the other characters are being swept away in a huge ocean swell. The seahorse grips on to weeds, and the other characters hold on tight to the seahorse to save themselves from being swept away.

Tell students they'll be using images and speech bubbles to tell their story. This can be created digitally, selecting images via internet searches then using design programs such as Microsoft Paint to add speech bubbles. Alternatively, students can draw illustrations on paper, using textas or coloured pencils before adding speech bubbles to their drawings.

Reading for meaning

Read 'Superpowers of a Dragon' and answer the following comprehension questions. Some answers are easy to find in the text, while others will make you think.

1. How did Daisy feel about moving to a new school?

2. Name three of Daisy's classmates, and say what kind of animal they are?

3. What type of dragon has a large flattened tail like a crocodile?

4. What does Daisy look like?

5. Why didn't Daisy feel like playing soccer with the others?

6. What are some of the superpowers of Australian dragons?

Full Stop.

play by Trish Puharich | illustrated by Cheryl Orsini

EN2-2A | ACELY1683

Compose and edit sentences, adding correct punctuation.

Discuss apostrophes of contraction, ensuring students are clear that apostrophes are used to show letters have been omitted. Identify the following examples of contractions featured in the play: I'm, we'll, I'll, you're, won't, couldn't. For each example, identify the original version prior to letters being omitted (I am, we will, you are, will not, could not).

Discuss the way the different punctuation marks in the play describe themselves:

Full stop: I like to finish things properly, and I'm always there at the end.

Exclamation mark: Right on! Hey! Cool! Awesome!

Question mark: What? Who? Me? Why? Where?

What do you want to know? What am I supposed to say? What am I supposed to do?

What kind of person are you looking for?

Comma: I could drive, shop, count, clean, cook, run, eat, teach ...

Subscribers to the digital edition can complete the [interactive activity](#) now.

Discuss how an apostrophe of contraction might describe itself if it were to appear in the play. A sample answer might be: I like to help words save time, helping them cut out letters and reminding them where the letters used to be.

Place students in pairs. Ensure students are familiar with when each of the following forms of punctuation are used: full stops (if a sentence is a statement), question marks (to follow a question) and exclamation marks (when something is exciting or dramatic).

Instruct students to create a line to be added to the play, in character as an apostrophe of contraction. Tell students to omit the punctuation (the apostrophe, and any sentence punctuation required, such as full stops, question marks or exclamation marks).

Once complete, instruct students to swap with another pair. Tell students to add the missing punctuation to the other group's sentence. After students have practiced adding punctuation to a sentence, inform them they will be competing in a challenge, editing as many sentences as possible within thirty seconds.

Instruct students to remain in pairs and construct multiple sentences, that could be added to the play, and that require a variety of punctuation marks to be added.

Sample ideas include:

- I wish I wasnt so busy adding punctuation the end of sentences
- My work means Im always busy helping in sentences
- Oh no.. not more work for me to do... I cant believe it

Remind students to leave out the required punctuation.

After students have composed a number of sentences, instruct them to swap sentences with another pair. Set a timer for thirty seconds and see how many sentences each group can edit in that time.

I command you to ...

Some commands (or *imperatives*) can be very strong. Other commands are gentler, depending on the speech verb and the punctuation.

1. Change the following sentences into commands. The first one has been done for you.

Could you take the garbage out? → Go and take the garbage out.

a. Could you stop asking questions?

b. Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

c. I'd like a comma in my sentence please.

2. Change the following commands into something more polite!

a. Help me!

b. What am I supposed to do?

c. This is wrong!

d. Give me my punctuation back!

3. On the lines below, write two sentences of your own, using speech verbs from the box below that you have not already used, to create a strong command and a gentle command.

said	yelled	screamed	bellowed	whispered	murmured	remarked
shouted	grumbled	commanded	encouraged	suggested		

a. (strong command) _____

b. (gentle command) _____

Storm Walk

story by Yvonne J Nolan | illustrated by [Aśka](#)

[EN2-8B](#) | [ACELT1599](#)

Experiment with using setting to create mood through sketching and labelling a location from the story.

Discuss the setting of the story, focusing largely on the time of day and the weather, ensuring students identify the story is set on a stormy night.

Discuss how this adds to the mood of the story. Sample answers include that it provides tension and drama to the challenges the characters encounter.

Model sketching a rough drawing of the route the dog takes, and labelling the sketch with the emotions evoked by the setting. Draw the first few elements of the setting on the board, instructing students to follow along as the sketch is modelled, using a piece of paper of their own. Instruct students to continue with the sketch independently, discussing ideas with a partner. A sample response is provided below:

- Sketch the entrance to the home on one side with a path leading from there. Place a paperbark tree on the corner. Sketch a street leading from the tree.
- Place a park next to the street. Label the sky with the sound of thunder rumbling and note that this creates tension. Draw Charlie the cat running past the park, looking scared. Note this 'evokes tension in the reader'.
- Place a Ute on the road with a soaking wet man calling out 'Charlie' from the open window and label this 'evokes fear about what has happened to Charlie'.
- Draw flashing lightening in the sky, again noting: 'this adds to the tension and creates drama surrounding where the cat might be'.

Share responses. Discuss how the same setting might be described to evoke different moods. Sample ideas might include: to create a happy setting, you might describe the warm glow of the sun and the trees swaying in a gentle wind, or to create a different version of a tense setting you could feature a blistering hot sun and wilted plants for a scene where an animal is desperately searching for water. Instruct students to select a mood they wish to evoke through their setting.

Using the sketch created earlier, tell students to label the new elements based on the mood they have selected to evoke. You may like to do this using a different coloured pencil from that used earlier. For example, label the sky, 'scorching hot sun', resketch the dog looking forlorn with an open mouth, to show they're thirsty and add the shimmer of heat to the pavement.

Extension

Students can use the ideas from their sketch to write a brief story where the mood is evoked through the descriptions of the setting.

Contractions

Contractions are a good example of informal language. This is when two words are joined together so we can say them fast. Here are the contractions from 'Storm Walk'—which words make them up?

Contraction	The words that make up the contraction
it's	it + is
wouldn't	
we're	
I'm	

Now try creating some contractions. Rewrite the sentence using apostrophes to show where you have contracted the words by missing letters.

I do not like storms.	
I will never leave my owner again.	
We have already been running today.	
Let us walk in the rain.	
Who is coming to my puppy party?	
He is very clever.	
Dad is making dinner.	
Charlie would have kept on running if it had not rained.	
The cat is shivering from the cold.	
We will be soaking wet.	

Now write two sentences of your own about the story 'Storm Walk' using some of the contractions from above.

Ready for Take-Off? Paper Planes!

article by Karen Jameyson | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

EN2-8B | ACELA1483

Experiment with shooting images from a range of distances to show the process of constructing a paper boat.

Inform students that photographers and illustrators consider a range of factors when making decisions about the angle and distance to shoot images from.

Show students a variety of images shown from different distances, such as those found on [Filmmaking 101](#), on BHPPhotoVideo. Focus specifically on the long, medium and close-up shots, and discuss the impact each of these shots have on viewers. Ensure students observe the following:

- Long shots show the focal point of the image in its entirety, often with much of the setting or background visible. Long shots are used to show the situation or background the object exists in. They are useful for scene setting.
- Medium shots show objects with some background elements. They are useful for making comparisons, such as the distance between objects.
- Close-ups are taken when the photographer is near to the object, with the chosen subject matter filling much of the frame. Close-ups allow for greater connection to the subject matter.

Examine the images that accompany the article, identifying the distance they are shown from, and suggesting possible reasons why the distance was chosen. Sample responses are provided in the table below:

Image	Chosen distance the object is shown from and possible reasons for this choice
Illustration of the flying planes (page 28)	Medium shot, showing the man from waist height and the planes above his head. This emphasizes the distance from his head that the planes are flying at.
Photo of the Wright Brothers testing an early plane (page 29)	Long shot, shown from behind to emphasize the height of the plane and the direction it is travelling in.
Photo of a hand (page 30)	Close-up, with the paper aeroplane the focus.
Illustration of aphid airlines (page 31)	Long shot, used to show entire plane with the heads of the passengers visible in the windows.

View the video [How to Make a Paper Boat](#), or follow the instructions on [How to Make a Paper Boat](#), found on EasyPeasyandFun.

As students create their boats instruct them to photograph the process. Discuss the different types of shots that might be used (for example a long shot might be chosen to show the students busy with the task while close-ups might be used to show the specific steps required in the construction process).

Use a sink or a large tub of water to sail the boats in. Instruct students to photograph the boats as they attempt to sail them. Discuss the distance they might choose to photograph from (for example a long shot of the tub, and a close-up of their boat on the water). Instruct students to compile their images into a document or presentation, using programs such as Microsoft Word or Google Slides.

So many syllables!

There are plenty of multisyllabic words in the article 'Ready for Take-off? Paper Planes!'. Find words with three, four, five syllables and break them into their segments below. In the leftover boxes (and there will be some), try and think of your own words. Remember to stick with the theme of the article.

Three syllable words

in	ven	ted

Four syllable words

Five syllable words

The Paper Aeroplane

poem by Kate Rietema | illustrated by Fifi Colston

[EN2-2A](#) | [ACELY1682](#)

Compose a poem featuring rhyming couplets, to outline challenges encountered while creating a paper craft item.

Discuss the story told through the poem (the construction and use of a paper aeroplane).

Show students the blog, [18 Easy Paper Crafts for Kids You'll Want to Make Too!](#) on MyKidsTime. Select a paper craft item to construct during the modelled part of the lesson. You might like to try the paper weaving craft.

Model constructing the item, and allow time for students to construct their own version. Record the steps in the process on the board. For example:

- Fold a piece of paper in half.
- Cut lines along the fold line.
- Cut strips from a separate sheet of paper.
- Thread the strips through the cuts in the first piece of paper, pushing them back and forth in a weaving pattern.

Discuss challenges you encounter as students create the craft item and note these on the board. Sample ideas include: remembering to alternate the position you start the next layer of weave from to ensure you create an alternating pattern.

Identify the rhyming pattern used in The Paper Aeroplane (rhyming couplets). Using the notes on the board, jointly construct a rhyming poem outlining the process for constructing the chosen paper craft item and any challenges encountered during the process. A rhyming dictionary such as [RhymeZone](#) could be used to identify rhyming words.

A sample poem is provided below:

Cut the coloured paper into strips, evenly space,
Slip the strips through the gaps, remember not to race.
Sliding paper back and forth, alternate the pattern,
Make a weave so colourful, like the moons of Saturn.
Oh whoops I've done it wrong, the pattern isn't matching,
It's OK, just restart, patterns are always hatching.

Extension

Students can select their own item of paper craft to construct and compose a poem on the process.