

Across the Milky Way

story by David Hill | illustrated by [Douglas Holgate](#)

[EN2-10C](#) | [ACELT1605](#)

Experiment with the technique of a plot twist.

Read the short story with the class, ending after the sentence:

He speaks the greeting that Earth’s inhabitants always speak when they meet anyone.

Conceal the illustration on page 5 which foreshadows the plot twist.

Explain to the class that this story ends with a plot twist. If necessary, provide a definition of a plot twist: an unexpected occurrence or turn of events. Then generate a class list of possible conclusions for the story. Examples could include:

- A minor error ends all hope for success
- It was all a story in the narrator’s imagination
- The aliens aren’t friendly after all.

Read the story’s conclusion. See if the plot twist (Earth’s inhabitants were cats, not humans) matches any of the ideas in the class list. Then discuss why authors might use plot twists. Suggested answers include:

- They provide a huge shock or surprise.
- They make a story more interesting because it is hard to predict the plot.
- They encourage the reader to become a detective and look for clues before the plot twist happens.

You could also ask students to think of any famous plot twists in literature, film and television. Some examples include:

- Scabbers, Ron’s rat, is really Peter Pettigrew, a villain, in “Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban”.
- Lotso handing Woody and Buzz over to the toddler room at Sunnyside daycare centre in “Toy Story 3”.

Explain to students that they will come up with their own plot twist for a traditional tale.

First, provide students with a list of [Grimms’ Fairy Tales](#) to choose from:

- Hansel and Gretel
- The Pied Piper of Hamelin

- The Frog Prince
- Little Red Riding Hood

Using Google Docs or Microsoft Office 365, provide students with an editable copy of the story.

Next, generate a list of possible plot twists. You might like to show the students the website [Twist in the Tale](#) which provides a range of examples.

Ask students to choose their favourite plot twist from the class list. Then ask students to insert the plot twist at an appropriate moment in the story's conclusion. They should delete any text that does not fit with their plot twist. For example, in a new version of "Little Red Riding Hood" it is revealed at the end of the story that Little Red is really an adopted grizzly bear in disguise and it is the wolf who is in trouble. The student would then delete the story's traditional ending of the hunter's arrival. Instead, Little Red might give the wolf such a fright he spits grandma up and runs away.

Extension: Reread 'Across the Milky Way' and look for clues that reveal that the narrator is a cat. For example, the illustration on page 5, their diet of meat and milk, their large green eyes. Ask students to sprinkle clues throughout their rewritten traditional tale in a similar style. For example, Little Red could have a very large hood to cover her ears, or carry a basket full of honey.

Will Wonders Never Cease? The Ant Plant

article by [Zoë Disher](#) | photo by Alamy

[EN2-9B](#) | [ACELA1498](#)

Summarise a text using technical vocabulary and a graphic organiser.

Read the text and ask students the questions, below. You may wish to record answers using a [Mentimeter](#) or similar interactive presentation.

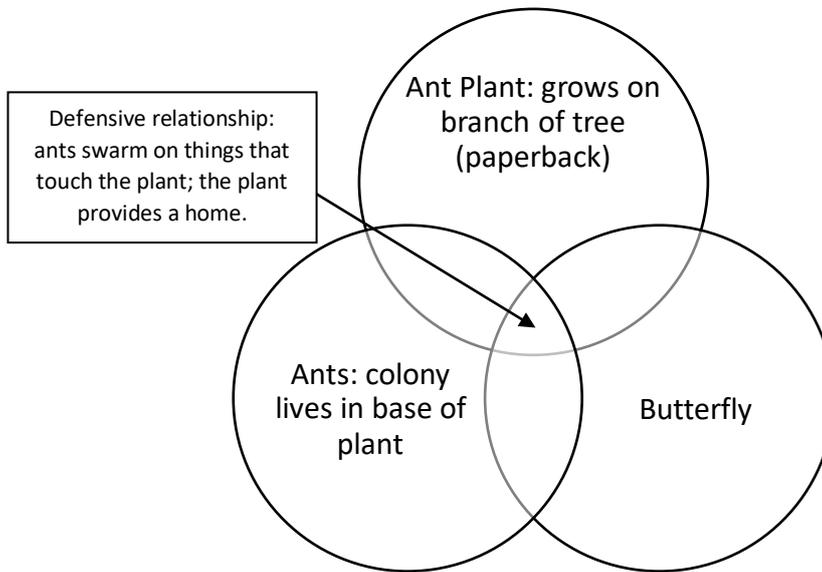
- Who is the article about? (Ant plants, ants and Apollo Jewel Butterflies)
- Where are the plants from? (Coastal North Queensland)
- What is the relationship between the Ant plant and ants? (They protect each other)

Explain to students that they have compiled a basic nonfiction summary. Using a graphic organiser, they will add more detail using technical vocabulary.

View the clip [Harry Butler and the Ant Plant](#). Introduce the term symbiosis and his definition: a relationship of two different things which live together for a particular purpose.

Using the worksheet [Venn Diagram, 3 Circles](#), record the symbiotic relationship between the Ant plant, ants and the Apollo Jewel Butterflies. Explain to students that features of the plant and insects are listed in the outer part of the circle. Aspects of their relationships are listed in the overlapping inner segments. Model responses for students by using the information presented in the Harry Butler clip (note: this clip does not refer to the butterfly).

Some sample answers are:



After modelling how to complete the Venn Diagram, students independently extract additional information about the insects, plant and symbiosis from the article. (For example, in the base there are lots of ready-made tunnels, the plant gets nutrients from the ants' waste, the ants carry the eggs of the butterfly, the caterpillars produce a sticky liquid that the ants eat.)

Ask students to again answer the question: "What is the relationship between the Ant plant and ants?" Identify how their answers have increased in detail and now use technical vocabulary (symbiosis) after completing a graphic organiser.

The New Kid

play by [Bill Condon](#) | illustrated by [Anna Bron](#)

[EN2-1A](#) | [ACELY1688](#)

Explore how exaggeration is used to make a text humorous.

Read the text aloud. This could be done with two volunteers reading to the class, or students working in pairs.

Ask students what is funny and unusual about this story. They should identify that Zac early in the conversation starts making things seem worse or more dramatic than they really are ('I broke *both* arms playing cricket.'). Lydia shortly after also starts adding details to her stories ('I have to sleep with dozens of snakes'). Acknowledge students who use the terms exaggeration, overstatement, overkill etc.

Introduce students to the term **exaggeration**: making something seem larger, more important, better or worse than it really is. Students can consolidate their understanding of the term using a **Fruyer model** graphic organiser.

Ask students to consider why the author has used so much exaggeration in this story. Acknowledge answers that make the following points:

- children often use exaggeration when they are speaking to one another and
- exaggeration can be really funny.

Explain to students that they are going to use exaggeration to make an ordinary story more interesting by following the steps below.

Ask students to think of an ordinary event that they can tell as a story for approximately one minute. For example: On Saturday we caught the train to the Sydney Aquarium and had sushi for lunch.

Ask them to tell their story to a partner. The partner will then tell them their story. Remind students that they need to be active listeners as they will be repeating their partner's story to a new person.

Before they switch partners, ask students to add some exaggerated detail to the story they just heard to make it sound more exciting. For example: On Saturday, we tried to catch a train to Sydney, but we missed it. So we walked to Sydney and went to the Aquarium, where a tank broke in front of us and I was chased by a shark, flapping about on the land.

Students relay their exaggerated story to their new partner. They then listen to their partner's exaggerated story.

Students then find a new partner and repeat this process. They will retell the most recent story that they heard, adding in extra exaggerated details. They should not repeat stories.

Continue the game until students have told a range of exaggerated stories. Ask students to repeat some of the funny stories that they heard.

African Itching Ants

story by [Bill Condon](#) | illustrated by [Stephen Axelsen](#)

EN2-8B | ACELY1690

Design a cartoon strip based on the events in the story.

Read the story as a class. Due to its length and the amount of detail, you may wish to summarise the narrative using a [Story Map](#).

Explain to students that they are going to turn their favourite section of the story into a comic strip. Then explicitly teach the conventions of comic strips, using either the comic serials in this issue of Blast Off, or a comic serial of your choice such as [Peanuts](#). Use your selected comic to unpack the following textual features:

1. Comics are an entertaining way to tell a story using words and pictures. Due to limited space they only focus on the main idea and most important events.
2. Each box is called a panel and is surrounded by a thick border called a gutter.
3. Captions tell the reader when and where events in the story are happening. This is the narrator's voice.
4. Speech bubbles contain the characters' spoken words, while thought bubbles show the characters' unspoken thoughts.
5. Sometimes words may be in bold text. This indicates strong emotions or yelling.

Next, explain to students that they will need to select an extract, or section of text to turn into a comic strip. They should choose a section that contains a list of dramatic events. For example:

- Pages 12-13 "I like the people in my photos to be in special poses..." to "It's a water pistol camera."
- Pages 16-17 "Donald starts to unscrew the lid..." to "Kids rush to the door."

Give students a six panel [Comic Strip Template](#) to plan their work. Provide students with the following success criteria:

- Covers the most important events in the extract.
- Contains images that are closely linked to the story.
- Uses captions to explain the when and where in the narrator Daisy's voice.
- Uses a combination of speech bubbles (to show dialogue) and thought bubbles (to show thinking).

After students have completed a draft, give them time to complete their polished comic strip. This can be completed either on paper or digitally.

If students are completing their comic strip on paper, let them choose their own comic book template from the range provided on the website, above.

Alternatively, students can also complete their comic strips using the App [Book Creator](#). This allows students to stage photos, upload them into a comic strip template and then add the appropriate captions, speech and thought bubbles.

Apostrophes

Read 'African Itching Ants'. 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
author's	possession	belonging to the author

Write two sentences. Use an apostrophe of contraction and an apostrophe of possession in each sentence, for example, *I've read Donald's book before.*

1. _____

2. _____

Army Ants

poem by Robert Schechter | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

[EN2-6B](#) | [ACELY1689](#)

Perform a reading of the poem based on its rhythm.

Read the poem to the class or [view](#) the poem. Ask students what they notice about the sound of the poem as it is being read. Students should identify:

- That it rhymes. The rhyme scheme is ABCB and the even numbered lines rhyme with each other (minute, boot, salute and shoot).
- That it has a steady beat or rhythm. The odd numbered lines have four beats, and the even numbered lines have three beats.

Complete a stepping activity to help students identify the rhythm of the poem. Ask students to stand in a line. As you read the poem, they will take a step on each 'beat'. You may wish to project the poem with the beats indicated with a / to assist students completing this activity. For example:

/How can /there be /army /ants?
They're /simply /too min/ute.

Read the poem a few times, asking students to step to the beat on each reading. They will increasingly become more confident marching to the beat of the poem.

Discuss why rhythm is a common and important technique in poetry. For example, rhythm gives a musical quality to poetry and makes it enjoyable to listen to. It also helps to make the poem easier to memorise. Rhythm can also suit the subject matter of the poem. Poems recited by armies or marching bands often have a strong rhythm to make them easy to walk to.

View the clip [The Wiggles: The Ants Go Marching](#). Discuss how the staging matches the rhythm of the poem. (The poem has a very strong beat and they are dressed like a marching band.)

Instruct students that they will perform 'Army Ants' in the style of The Wiggles clip. Break them into groups of 3-4 and give them time to rehearse. Use the following success criteria to structure rehearsal time:

- Deliver the poem in unison with all group members keeping to the beat.
- Add appropriate hand gestures (for example, point to their shoes, mimic a salute).

Going to School on the Goldfields

article by [Kate Walker](#) | illustrated by Fifi Colston

[EN2-11D](#) | [ACELT1603](#)

Examine the different perspectives in the article through a hot seating activity.

Read the text as a class. After reading, complete a [Think-Pair-Share](#) routine with the following question as the stimulus: How were schools on the goldfields different to our school?

Define the term perspective: the point of view that events and feelings are told from. Link perspective to the Think-Pair-Share where students were comparing their perspective of school, to the perspective of the children who were on the Australian goldfields. Then explain to students that there are multiple perspectives in every text, although a text usually focusses on one perspective. Ask students to identify the main perspectives in the text (the school children in the 1850s and the school children in the 1880s) and see if they can identify any other perspectives (the parents, people cheating miners, young teachers, older teachers, trained teachers in school buildings).

Divide students into groups of 3-4. Explain that each group will be stepping into the shoes of two different characters in the article (for example a group could compare the perspective of a child in the 1850s and a trained teacher in a school building). You could use a [Random Name Picker](#) to allocate these roles.

Provide groups with a copy of the [Differing Perspectives](#) graphic organiser and ask them to complete it, considering the roles that they have been allocated. They should reread the text and look for clues to help them complete their answers. For example:

Perspective of a child in the 1850s	Perspective of a trained school teacher
Thoughts: I have to learn really quickly to help my family. I'm 13, why am I sitting next to a 6 year old? I don't have a slate and I'm sick of watching the student next to me!	Thoughts: Was it the right decision to use my training to travel out to the goldfields? I hope a child brings some firewood today to heat the room.
Feelings: Responsibility – the family's fortune depends on my education, guilt – I might not be learning quickly enough at school, boredom – the lessons are not interesting, pain – weather is too hot or	Feelings: Uncomfortable – even though we're in a new wooden building it is still boiling in summer and freezing in winter. Overwhelmed – there are 60 students in this classroom and I find it so hard to

cold and I have rashes and insect bites from sitting outside	teach them all at the same time.
Actions: Helping my parents dig for gold most days. Attending school for a half day 2-3 days per week.	Actions: Writing on my proper blackboard. Teaching up to 60 pupils of all ages. Using 'Readers' as my textbooks to teach.

Explain to students that they will use their information about the different perspectives in the text to complete a hot seat activity. Visit the Digital Learning Selector's explanation of the [Hot Seat](#) activity for more information and ICT templates.

Complete the hot seat activity using the following steps:

- First, as a class, generate a list of topics that could be discussed with the multiple individuals involved in school on the goldfields (What were the learning conditions in a tent school? Did conditions improve when the school moved into a wooden building? What sort of training had the teachers had? What are the ages of the students and teachers being questioned?)
- Students remain in the same group (the group in which they completed the Differing Perspectives worksheet). Two members of the group will each adopt a perspective. For example, one group member may be the school child from the 1850s, the other a trained teacher from the 1880s. The other two group members will sit in the crowd, asking the questions.
- Before commencing the activity, the group then generates a list of questions to ask the panel. The resource [Hot Seating question cards](#) can be used as sentence starters.
- Form the panel and allow each group to take turns with their speakers in the hot seat. All class members have an opportunity to ask questions during the activity.

Writing in character

Imagine you are a child living on the goldfields. Write a letter to one of your friends back in the city, explaining what life is like.

Your address:

Your friend's address:

Dear _____,

1. Begin your letter with some friendly greetings and questions, for example, 'How is the family?'.

2. Explain how you felt about leaving your home in the city.

3. Explain the conditions that you now live in.

4. Provide details of a typical school day.

5. Finish the letter with a summary of how you feel about your 'new' life.

A Thief in the Bush

poem by Sandy Wooton | illustrated by [David Legge](#)

[EN2-4A](#) | [ACELT1604](#)

Tell a story using rhyming couplets.

Read the poem. Ask students what they notice about the sound of the poem. They should identify that a pair of lines rhyme (for example disappear/year). Explain the term rhyming couplet: two lines that follow one another that end in a rhyming word.

Explore the use of rhyming couplets. Read the poem to the class, without showing them the text. Then, provide them a copy of the text as a cloze passage. Students need to identify the second rhyming word from a word bank. For example:

At our camp things disappear:
drink bottle lids, Eve's comb last _____.

If you have a digital subscription, complete the [Find the Rhyme](#) activity.

Extension: Explain that the poem has an AABB rhyme scheme and annotate the poem with the class.

At our camp things disappear:	A
drink bottle lids, Eve's comb last year.	A
This month, my toothbrush, shell and strings.	B
Today, a pair of Mum's earrings.	B
Our grandpa said, 'It's my belief,	C
that in the bush there is a thief!	C

Rhyming couplets are a clever and memorable way to tell a story. You might like students to summarise the story in 'The Bush Thief' before completing the next step of the activity using the technique [Somebody Wanted But So Then](#). You might also wish to show other examples of the form, such as the picture books of Julia Donaldson, Dr Seuss or Lynley Dodd.

Explain to students that they will write a short poem that also uses rhyming couplets. First, they should plan an anecdote using the following stimulus questions:

- Event
- Where
- When
- Details
- How it ended

Next students should experiment with writing their story as briefly as possible. They should also try to break their story into poetic lines, rather than writing continuous prose.

Once students have written their story in the shortest form possible and looking like a poem, give them access to [Rhyme Zone](#) (a rhyming dictionary) to help them to create rhyming couplets. Allow students to change details in the story to suit the rhyme scheme.

Example poem:

One day, shopping with my mum
I saw a man trip on a plum.
He tripped and fell, sprawled on the floor,
And suddenly I heard him roar:
"Shopping centre, that's it, you're over
Unless you give me a free pavlova!"

Using the rule of three

The rule of three is a writing pattern where three characters, examples or modifiers are used to create a rhythm in a text.

Part A

Identify which of the following sentences use the rule of three.

1. This month, my toothbrush, shell and strings.
2. Our grandpa said, 'It's my belief, that in the bush there is a thief!'
3. Shells and feathers, Mum's earrings ... a bower full of missing things.

Part B

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

1. eat, drink and play

2. stop, look and listen

Part C

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

1. three different colours

2. three words to describe an animal

Hillbilly Heroes

story by [Marian McGuinness](#) | illustrated by [Aśka](#)

[EN2-2A](#) | [ACELT1794](#)

Design a chatterbox and plan a story that includes humorous details in the style of 'Hillbilly Heroes'.

After reading the story, ask students to interpret the mood of the story (the answer should be light, humorous and strange). Then ask students to identify the parts of the story they found funny, encouraging them to reference as much detail as possible. (Examples may include Farmer Jill's house, her behaviour such as leading goat yoga, the names of her goats and the description of the goat poo.)

Explain to students that this story is funny because it contains lots of random and unusual details, events and behaviours. Analyse the extraordinary features using the steps outlined.

First, students complete a [Narrative Writing Graphic Organizer](#). After completing their organiser, students highlight the unusual characters, events and details. (Examples include: the name Come-by-Chance, Farmer Jack's job growing Christmas Trees, green clouds during the thunderstorm.)

Next, students complete the [About a Character](#) worksheet to analyse Farmer Jill. Students should look for clues in the text and in the images, especially the representation of Jill and her house. After completing this worksheet, again ask students to highlight anything unusual about the character. (Examples include: Farmer Jill's purple hair and undercut, reading the goats bedtime stories and putting hats on her goats).

After students have searched the text for unusual and humorous details, explain that they will now plan their own stories which will also contain extraordinary features.

Show students how to make a chatterbox, either using a [Template](#) or by showing them how to fold the paper correctly using the resource [Make a Chatterbox](#).

Instruct students to fill their chatterbox with words (this [image](#) can be used as an example). Words can either be entirely random (encourage students to use a range of people, places and things), or students can fill the chatterbox with settings in the outside squares, characters in the middle triangles and complications/problems in the inner triangles.

Give students an opportunity to run through a variety of chatterbox rounds with their peers. Each time they should write down the words/phrases that they are allocated.

After students have five or more generated chatterbox stories, ask them to pick their favourite one. It should be used as the basis for completing a more detailed [Narrative Writing Graphic Organizer](#). Using the words and phrases encountered in the chatterbox as a stimulus, students should make sure that their graphic organizer is filled with all sorts of unusual and humorous detail.

Extension: students write the story in full.

Dinner Venue

poem by Jenny Erlanger | illustrated by [Andrew Joyner](#)

EN2-8B | ACELA1496

Predict the content of a poem based on its illustration.

Display Andrew Joyner’s illustration without text. Create a class list of what can be seen in the image. You may like to do this in a table, such as the one below, which includes some suggested answers.

Obvious Details	Smaller details
Dad is happily serving green balls (maybe brussels sprouts) Mum is eating them The baby looks angry and is passing them back	There is a football in the garden Lemons have fallen off the trees A glass of water has tipped over There is a sunset

Explain to students that we read an image, just like we read a book. Introduce three techniques used to create an effective image: framing, salience and reading path. Visit the website [Visual Techniques](#) for definitions of these terms.

First, as a class explore how framing is used in the picture. Using a photocopied version of the image, students should highlight the features that frame the family: most obviously the rug, then the trees on either side and finally the contrast between the sun and the sky.

Extension: ask why the family have been strongly framed. Acknowledge answers that mention that it is a close family dinner or that the parents have control over their children.

Next, ask students what they think the salient image is (they may differ in their opinions of the salient image). The most likely answers are the dad or brussels sprouts. You could construct a list and then hold a class poll on the salient image using [Mentimeter](#).

Finally ask students to study the reading path of the image. A likely reading path is from the brussels sprouts to the girl (the narrator) to the baby, to the mum and then to the dad, before looking at the setting of the poem, the backyard. Instruct students to draw arrows showing their interpretation of the reading path. In table groups, students can compare their opinions.

After analysing the visual literacy of the poem, revisit the class list of details in the image. See if students can find any missed details (such as the steam rising off the brussels sprouts).

Instruct students that they will now predict what the poem will be about. Use the following questions to encourage thinking:

- Who can we see in this picture?
- What do you think is their relationship to each other?
- What are they doing?
- Why do you think they are doing this?
- What do you imagine are they thinking?
- What do you predict will happen in this poem?

You may wish to use the worksheet [Making Predictions](#), which lists adverbs and modal verbs, to enhance student responses.

Reveal and read the poem. Students should assess the accuracy of their predictions and identify extra details in the picture that are not mentioned in the poem (such as the football and spilt water).