

Metamorphosis

poem by Cindy Breedlove | illustrated by Michel Streich

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

Compose a short poem.

Before reading the poem ask students what they already know about butterflies. Use the following prompts:

- What do you know about butterflies?
- What do you know about the life cycle of a butterfly?

View [How a Caterpillar Becomes a Butterfly](#) before visiting [The Butterfly Lifecycle](#) page on the Coffs Harbour Butterfly House website.

Students are now ready to read the poem or [view](#) the poem if you have a digital subscription. After reading or viewing, students work in pairs to complete the following activities:

- This poem is written in first person, whose perspective is presented?
- The word of the month as shown on the contents page is 'alteration.' Circle or highlight the words in the poem that show the alteration (answers: rearranged, changed)
- Is this poem a scientific or imaginative text? Why?

Ask the class if they know any other animals that experience a metamorphosis as part of their life cycle?

Suggested answer: Frogs!

View [The Life Cycle of a Frog](#).

Return to pairs. Write a four-line poem that shows the lifecycle of a frog. The poem should

- Be written in first person showing the perspective of a frog.

- Should focus on one key part of the frog life cycle (for example, moving from Froglet to adult frog and losing the tail)
- Should have the first two lines describing the first life cycle part, and the second two lines describing after the change

Example:

My tail, my best feature,
Swished behind me when I swam
But today I am a sad creature
I found my tail has gone!

Extension Task: Create an illustration to accompany the poem

Dragonfly's Surprise

story by Dannielle Viera | illustrated by Sheree Fiala

[EN2-10C | ACELY1680](#)

Examine and reflect on how descriptive language can be used to position readers.

Read the story up to 'He took a deep breath and flew towards them' on page 6. Students highlight the sentences in the first section of the story which give a description of the dragon.

Answers:

- 'the wretched dragon has wings of blistering speed. My feathers soon felt the sting of its sizzling breath.'
- 'the creature has claws like knives.'
- 'The dragon scorches and slashes whenever we come near. Is anyone brave enough to face such a demon?'

Students are to draw a scientific illustration of the dragon from the story. Discourage students from looking at the illustrations in the school magazine. The scientific drawing should be labeled using the words from the story, for example one label could be 'wings of blistering speed' while another could say 'claws like knives.' [Scientific illustration: What is it?](#) provides further information and samples you may like to use.

Sample scientific drawings include:

[Collection 27: Drawings of birds chiefly from Australia, 1791-1792](#)

[Dragons1640 by Ulysses Aldrovandi](#)

After students have created their scientific illustration of the dragon, volunteers are to share their scientific illustration with the class. Explaining how they represented each feature, and if they added more details and why.

Discuss the following:

- How do the descriptions from the Eagle, Elephant and Lion make you feel about the dragon?
- Why do you feel that way? (Hint – look at the words and phrases and techniques used in the descriptions).

- What do you think will happen to the dragonfly when they meet the dragon? Make a list of the predictions.

Finish reading the story. Then discuss the following:

- What surprised you about the dragon?

Students highlight the descriptions of the dragon from the second part of the story.

Answers:

- Scales shimmered in the sunlight
- Glittering diamonds studded the dragon's cheeks.
- eyes crinkled and he almost smiled, before another tear slid down his cheek.

The word of the month is 'alteration.' How did your perspective of the dragon change and why? Write a reflection on how your views changed using the following prompts:

- I thought...
- Then I discovered...
- Now I think...

Students can be extended by referring to the descriptions in the story and the language used to position the readers.

Sample answer:

I thought that the dragon was a terrible beast who was violent and evil. I felt this way because the animals described the dragon using words like 'wretched' and 'demon' to talk about the dragon and they described the wings, claws and breath as weapons.

Then I discovered that the dragon was actually a lonely creature who wanted to make friends with the animals but had accidentally hurt them in the process of trying to communicate with them.

Now I think that the dragon was just a lonely creature, desperate for company and unaware of its own strength. The animals and the readers judged the dragon before they knew the truth.

Comprehending 'Dragonfly's Surprise'

Read 'Dragonfly's Surprise' and answer the following comprehension questions. Some answers are easy to find in the text, while others will make you think.

1. Why did thunderous laughter echo around the cave when Dragonfly offered to face the dragon?

2. Who were the chiefs of the animal clans?

3. Why do you think Dragonfly said, 'Hello, cousin' to the dragon?

4. Why did the animals stop in their tracks at the sight of Dragon and Dragonfly?

5. What does the word 'toll' mean?

6. What piece of advice (or words of wisdom) would you give to the animal chiefs?

7. Write another paragraph at the end of this story. What happens next?

The Quietly Brave Umbrella Man

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

EN2-10C | ACELT1601

Compose a diary entry from the perspective of Jonas Hanway

After reading the story, summarise the invention of the rain umbrella by Jonas Hanway in the following table. (Sample answers included).

| Problem | Solutions prior to 1750 | Hanway's solution in 1750 | Inspiration for the new invention |
|---|---|--|--|
| In wet weather, people are getting wet from the rain. Wealthy people are able to seek shelter, but many poor people are unable to find shelter. | Hooded capes Blankets/Shawls Horse drawn Cabs | A rain-proof parasol/umbrella Made from oiled cotton cloth Whale bone Wooden handle | In Persia, Hanway saw people shading themselves from the sun with parasols. He thought the idea could be adapted to protect people from the rain |

Imagine you are Jonas Hanway. Write a series of journal entries showing the progress of your invention – the rain umbrella. The summary in the table will assist you in developing your set of journal entries.

Suggestions for the different journal entries include:

- Written during his time in Persia
- Showing his plans for the invention
- The completion of the umbrella
- Showing the response from the public
- Your thoughts on how this invention can help people

Some diary entries may include drawings or diagrams.

Character profile: Jonas Hanway

Read Kate Walker's article 'The Quietly Brave Umbrella Man'. Summarise the information in point form in the boxes below.

Part A

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Name | Jonas Hanway |
| Nationality | |
| Where was Hanway when he got the idea for the umbrella? | |
| Did Hanway's idea take off? | |
| Why did cab drivers threaten Jonas? | |
| What was Hanway's greatest achievement? | |
| What five words best describe Jonas Hanway? | |

Part B

Why might the article 'The Quietly Brave Umbrella Man' use illustrations to support the information rather than photographs? Record some reasons on the lines below.

The Ants and the Cricket

play by James Bean and Gillian Flaherty | illustrated by [Cheryl Orsini](#)

[EN2-8B](#) | [EN2-10C](#) | [EN2-7B](#) | [ACELA1490](#)

Design a set and costumes for the play.

Plays are meant to be performed, not read silently. Assign roles and read the play out loud as a class. The actors should stand at the front, and use actions and movement to help tell the story of 'The Ants and the Cricket.'

Discuss:

- What is the purpose of this play? (to entertain and to teach a moral or lesson)
- Is there a lesson that can be learnt? (the lesson is that hard work and preparation are rewarded, while ignoring responsibilities has consequences)
- Who is the intended audience? (children)
- How do we know? (the use of talking animals as characters, the rhyming dialogue of each character, the use of a narrator).
- If this play was being performed at your local theatre, who would go to see it? (young people, families)

Tell students that each of the illustrations show a character from the play and some different aspects of setting. Use these as inspiration for designing a set of costumes and props for each character (the ants, the cricket and the narrator) and draw backdrop designs for the stage, showing each season represented in the play.

When designing your costumes, it is important to consider the audience of the play and also the purpose – refer to the earlier discussions.

For inspiration on costumes view at these costume design sketches from the State Library of NSW for a play called 'Insect play.'

- [Costume designs, 1932-1960 / Thelma Afford](#) – Butterfly costumes
- [Costume designs, 1932-1960 / Thelma Afford](#) – a Chrysalis and a parasite
- [Costume designs, 1932-1960 / Thelma Afford](#) – Mr and Mrs Cricket

Extension: Read [The Ant and the grasshopper](#) and compare it with the play in this issue of Countdown, using a [T-chart](#) showing similarities and differences.

Bob Hightails It!

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

EN2-2A | ACELY1682

Conduct research to **compose** an information text about otters.

After reading the story, ask students the following questions:

- Is this story fact or fiction?
- How do you know?
- Are there any elements that are based on fact in the story?

Sample answers:

This story is fictional. It is a story with talking animals who are sailing on a ship. The elements of the story that are factual are about otters. Otters have strong tails, they live in Canada and they build dams and use their teeth to carve into wood.

Visit the following websites:

[North American river otter facts for kids](#)

[North American River Otter](#)

[Wildlife Wednesday - North American River Otter](#)

Students complete an [Animal research graphic organizer](#) in which they collect information about otters.

Once students have completed their research and have collected enough information, they are to compose an entry for a Children's animal encyclopedia about otters. The animal encyclopedia entry should include

- An image
- Information divided into subheadings – these can be based on the sections in the graphic organizer from the research phase of this activity

Things for students to remember:

- The target audience is children, so make it interesting and fun.
- Use language that is appropriate to an encyclopedia for kids (check out this example, [River Otter](#), from National Geographic).
- Some technical terms may need explanation – they could include a word list with definitions on the page if need be.

Know your offer!

Refer to 'Bob Hightails It!' to answer the following questions.

1. Describe Bob's nail hammering technique .

2. Where did Bob grow up?

3. What skills did Bob learn while he was growing up?

4. How would you describe Greenslade Moloney?
Record your ideas on the lines below.

5. How would Shasta and Ahab describe Bob?

6. What clues can you find to suggest that Bob is kind, friendly and quick thinking?

7. Can you suggest two alternative titles for this story?

8. There are some tricky words in this story. Write the dictionary meaning for the following words.

proWess

cad

notorious

Whiz Kids

poem by Jill McDougall illustrated by Amy Golbach

EN2-1A | ACELT1596

Compose a poem about the whiz kids in own class.

Read the poem together. As a class, using the whiteboard, write a list of the children in the poem, including the speaker. Next to each name write each child's talent.

Suggested answer:

| Child | Talent |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| Kate | Fast Fractions |
| Wayne | Mental maths |
| Tran | Skating |
| Polly | Swimming |
| Sam | Running |
| Jess | Encouraging others |
| Chen | Cleaning up |
| Emmy | Jokes |
| William | Cheerful |
| Speaker | Relaxed but quick to go and play |

Each student is now given the task to survey 5 peers from the class to find out their talent. Before they begin, the class should create a set of 3-4 standard questions they can ask their peers to find out what they are good at. Work out a standard set of questions together as a class.

Sample questions:

- What are your strengths?
- In your opinion, what is the one skill or talent you are most proud of?
- What do other people say you do well?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- At school, what do you do well?
- What are your hobbies?
- Do you play a sport?
- Do you play a musical instrument?
- Do you volunteer?

Once the class has developed a set of questions and before they are ready to survey their peers ask students to prepare their own personal answers to each of the questions.

Students now walk around the room with a clipboard, tablet/device or workbook and survey at least 5 peers. They should record the answers they are given. Encourage students to survey students they do not often sit with or spend time with.

After gathering the information about their peers, students can return to their desks and use the information they have collected to compose a poem in the style of 'Whiz kids' about the set of 5 peers and themselves.

After the poems have been completed, some students may like to read their work to the class and share the talents of their peers with the group.

Problem Pets

story by David Hill | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

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

Students **reflect** on the visual and language features that can be used to surprise a reader.

Before reading, project the image (without text) from page 26 on the screen. Tell students that the title of the story is 'Problem Pets.'

Give students three pieces of blank paper. Ask them to draw a speech bubble on each one. Then in the speech bubble, they are to write what they think the three people in the image are saying. Volunteers can show the class their speech bubbles.

Read the first half of the text on page 26 up to

'I wonder if anyone has a pet as mad as mine?' said Ben.

Before reading on ask students if any of their speech bubble ideas were similar to the conversation that they have just read in the first part of the story.

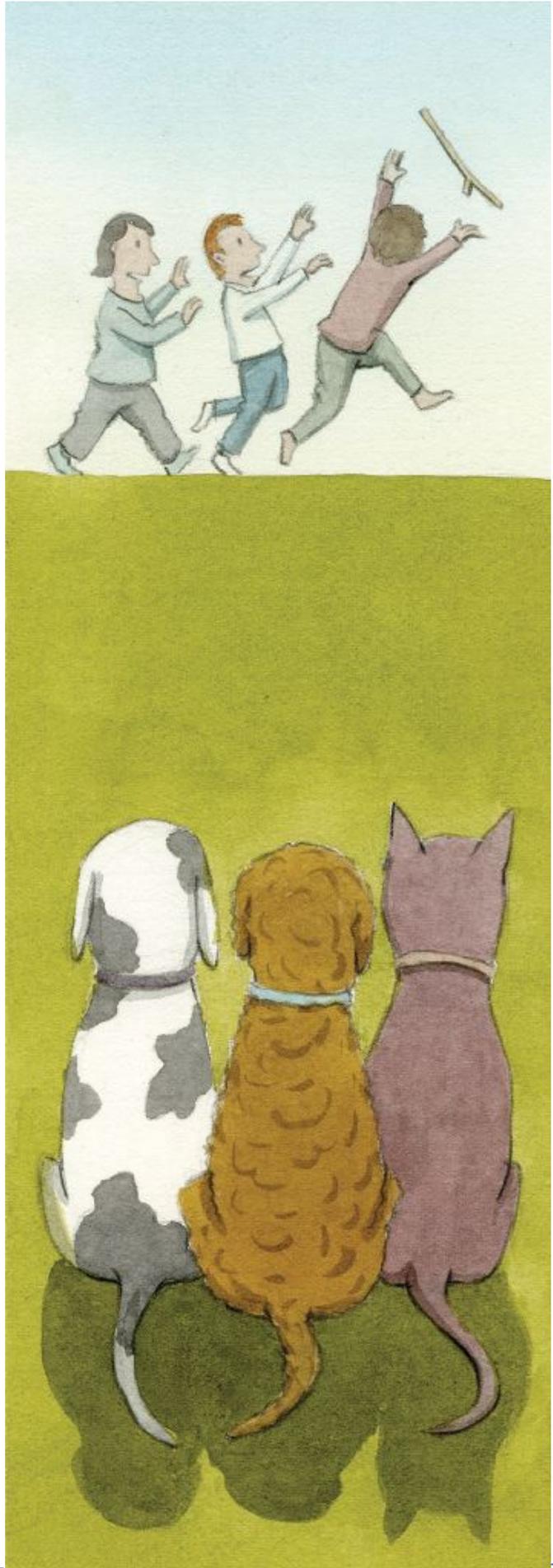
Now project the second . Using the second illustration as a guide, discuss the following:

- What surprised you about the image?
- Has the illustration change your understanding of the story?
- Who are Ben, Rik and Jess? How do you know?
- Predict how the story will end

Read the rest of the story. In pairs talk about the following:

- When did you realise that your understanding of the story was wrong?
- How did the author and illustrator trick you?
- Where are the clues that things are not as they seem?
- Why did you make assumptions about the first illustration, even though the dogs were in a circle in the foreground?





Captain Ahab's Weird Wide World: The Giant Gippsland Earthworm

Article by [Kate Walker](#) | illustrated by [Marjorie Crosby-Fairall](#)

[EN2-8B](#) | [ACELA1478](#)

Create a social media post to raise awareness of the endangered Giant Gippsland Earthworm.

Before reading the article, play the sound clip found at [Giant Gippsland earthworm](#) for students to listen to without revealing what they are listening to. Ask students to guess what made the sound. They may like to hear it a second time. After students have guessed and run out of ideas, it is time to read the article.

After reading the article, return to the sound clip – ask students again to identify what made the sound. Then scroll down and view the short video clip available on the same webpage.

Work in pairs or small groups to create a post to raise awareness of the plight of the Giant Gippsland Earthworm.

Introduce students to the idea of groups persuading others to change their activity for the benefit of the environment.

Before creating the persuasive text, discuss the language that might be used in a post like this. Consider:

- What kind of language is used in the article (answer: factual, informative, formal language)
- When trying to convince someone to agree with you or take action, how would your language be different? (Suggested answers: Modality, use of first person, stronger descriptive words)
- Which type of text is most likely to use the word 'you' to speak to the reader? Information texts or persuasive text? Why? (Answer: persuasive text because this is a less formal environment. The use of direct address is persuasive and inclusive – making readers of a post feel involved.)
- What are some examples of persuasive punctuation that you wouldn't find in an information text? (suggested answer: rhetorical questions, exclamations)

Students are now ready to create their post. Students should include the following:

- An image of the Giant Gippsland Earthworm or its habitat– they may choose a picture from the article, find one online or draw one.
- A persuasive caption introducing the Giant Gippsland Earthworm, the threats to its survival and calling for action to protect this unusual creature. Example: What slurps and gurgles and lives in underground tunnels? The giant Gippsland Earthworm! Never heard of it? Well, now you have! This incredible creature lives underground in one small area in Gippsland and it needs your help – its limited habitat is at risk – join us in the fight to save the endangered Giant Gippsland Earthworm and ask farmers to give them more space to live!
- Students should also consider the kind of group or media that may like to make a post like this – and discuss the best place to publish it

Sky Train

poem by Brian Gene Olson | illustrated by Ana Maria Mendez Salgad

EN2-8B | ACELA1483

Create a comic strip telling the story of the sky train from the poem.

Before reading introduce students to onomatopoeia as a technique. Organise students into pairs. Each student is to think about a sound they can create either with their mouth or by using equipment or things in their immediate environment. Students take turns to make their noise, while their partner listens. The partner who is listening to the sound then writes down the onomatopoeia or word that represents the sound. Students then change roles and complete the same activity again. Example – one student may take a piece of scrap paper and tear it, their partner might write down “reert” as the sound it makes. Pairs can report back to the class about their onomatopoeia creation.

Read the poem. After reading the poem, ask students to retell the story using four dot points. They may work in the same pairs again.

Sample answer:

- A passenger is travelling on a train
- Suddenly, the train lifts off the rails and starts to fly
- The birds flying beside the train think it is funny and make noises
- The passenger decides that they should just relax and enjoy the ride

For each dot point, ask students to add another sentence which shows what the passenger is thinking during that part of the story.

Sample:

- I’m a bit bored, this train ride is taking forever
- Hang on! I think the train is taking off! Yes, we have lift off! Woah!
- Is that bird laughing at me?
- Well, this is most unusual – I guess I’ll just have to sit back and enjoy the ride!

Then ask students to identify the onomatopoeia. Answers: honk, toot, hoot, chugga chugga choo. Discuss how onomatopoeia works to bring the story to life.

Introduce the concept of comic strips. Students will make a comic strip with four squares telling the story of the sky train, with one square per dot point from the previous activity.

Before they begin, view the comic serial 'Monkey, Bug, Rabbit and Goose' on page 2 of this issue of Countdown. Discuss the following features:

- Are the boxes (or panels) all the same size and shape, or do they vary – why?
- How do we know what the characters are saying?
- How are sound effects/onomatopoeia shown? Have you seen sound effects shown differently in other comics or cartoons you have read?

Ask students to identify the following in the serial 'Monkey, Bug, Rabbit and Goose.'

- a panel which is a close up of a character
- a panel showing a long angle – showing the scene from a distance

Discuss why it is important to have a mix of angles and shapes and sizes for each panel.

Students are now ready to create their four-panel comic strip based on the story of the sky train.

Success criteria:

- Use the four dot points to tell the story in four squares
- Use a range of panel shapes and sizes
- Use different angles – some close up and some from a distance
- Present the onomatopoeia words from the poem in an eye-catching way
- Use thought bubbles to show what the passenger is thinking during their journey
- Use bright colours

If I rode a Whale

poem by Amy Dunje | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

EN2-7B | ACELT1600

Analyse the use of imagery in the poem to create an image in the mind of the reader.

Read the poem together as a class.

The poem is very descriptive and uses a series of adjective-noun word pairs to help paint a picture of the girl's imaginative ride on a whale.

Circle the adjective-noun word pairs you can see in the poem.

Answers: Silver sea, coral caves, salty air, endless sky, stormy seas, sun-kissed days, emerald green, lands unseen, golden rays.

This descriptive technique is called imagery, which is designed to help readers form an image in their mind as they read.

Select one of the word pairs and close your eyes. What do you see when you think about the word pair you have chosen? Write it down or tell a partner.

If you took the adjective away, closed your eyes and thought about the noun on its own, what would you see? How would this be different? Write it down or tell a partner.

Draw a picture of the word pair you have selected. In your picture you should make careful choices about colour, salience and framing. More information about these [Visual Techniques](#) can be found on the Visual Literacy Skills webpage.

Find someone else in the class who chose the same word pair as you. Compare your pictures – what is the same, what is different? Talk about why you imagined that word pair in the way that you did. If you have a digital subscription, students should complete the [interactive now](#).

Extension: Students imagine they could ride a different kind of wild animal – for example, an African Elephant in the Savannah or a Polar Bear in the Arctic. Write a poem called 'If I rode a _____' Use the following steps as a guide:

- Use the internet to find images of the habitat of the chosen animal
- Write a set of 4-5 adjective/noun word pairs that relate to the images you found online
- Use the set of word pairs as a guide to piece together a poem about your adventures riding that particular animals
- Draw an illustration to accompany your poem
- Share it with the class

Poetry evaluation

Use the six thinking hats to help you explore the poem 'If I Rode a Whale'.

Each hat represents a different way of thinking. Write your responses to the questions in the table provided.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  | What is the poem about? | |
|  | What are the good points about the poem? | |
|  | What are the bad points about the poem? | |
|  | What feelings are associated with the poem? | |
|  | How could the poem be improved, changed or extended? | |
|  | Provide a summary of the poem. | |