

Waiting

poem by Val Neubecker , illustrated by Matt Ottley

Outcomes

Worksheet: [Exploring imagery](#)

Understanding

[EN3-3A](#) | [ACELA1518](#) | [EN3-7C](#) | [ACELT1617](#)

Before reading, activate prior knowledge of poetry and illustration.

Direct student to the title, 'Waiting' and the illustration. Who is waiting? What are they waiting for? How many characters are there? What can you read about the visual text, the setting, colours – what time of day, type of weather?

Identify print features.

Look at the poem and ask – What do you notice about the structure? Is 'Waiting' divided up into stanza, verses? There are some breaks in the poem, what do they indicate? Do they indicate 'wait time?' The line length and sentences are of varied length and do not have obvious structure. There are four columns of type, but one is separated from the rest by the illustration. Why? Is this a random placement or does this tell us something else about the text?

Identify language features: Literary devices and Figurative language.

Read the poem several times out loud

Discuss the following:

- Rhyming. Is 'Waiting' a poem that rhymes? Or does it rely on words and language to deliver meaning and effect? Poetry is often lyrical – which means that it is an art form that has musical qualities and uses rhythm and rhyme to deliver meaning and effect.
- Repetition. 'I'm Waiting' is repeated three times in the text. The line is isolated the second and third times it is repeated, like a lone surfer floating in the waves.
- Idiom. 'eyes scouring the waves' is an **idiom** – a saying that means 'to examine really hard'.
- Rhythm. Reading the poem out loud allows students to see that the poet has selected the words deliberately to reflect the flow and ebb of a body of water. The swell and the chopiness of the water echoed by the pattern of two- and three-words lines. While there is not a regular beat with accents placed on certain syllables like a rhyming poem, there is definitely a rhythm that reflects

the movement of the ocean and the person in it. the line length builds and crests in the last column which shows the surging power of the wave.

- Rhetorical device – unusual syntax. (Incomplete sentences). There are no full stops anywhere in this text. Only ‘WIPE OUT!’ uses capitals and an exclamation mark. To make a complete sentence, it must have a subject and a verb, and a complete thought. (Incomplete sentences have been used deliberately in this poem for impact an effect!) See the link for a grammar lesson on [complete sentences](#).
- Imagery using the five senses, is a literary device where writers create word pictures based on sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. This has been used very effectively in ‘Waiting’ as the surfer is ‘in the moment.’

Connecting

[EN3-8D](#) | [ACELT1613](#) | [EN3-3A](#) | [ACELY1713](#)

Connecting text to self.

Text-to-self connections occur when we make connections between personal experiences and the text.

Prompt: Sometimes we must work hard to make sense of what we are reading. This can be part of the challenge and the delight of reading poetry. Waiting, makes it easy for the reader to relate to what is happening as the character waits, then rides the wave. When you read this poem, what did you think and feel? Why?

Connecting text to text

Text-to-text connections occur when we make connections between other texts in relation to the texts we are reading and viewing.

Prompt: Texts in this issue of Touchdown that have a coastal setting and characters that surf:

My Mother’s Lament

Waiting is also featured in The School Magazine’s YouTube Channel.

View and discuss connections you have for the written/linguistic, and visual elements (multimodal) in these texts.

Connecting text to world.

Text-to-world connections occur when we relate the text with what we already know about the world

Create a poster of students’ favourite rhymes or other poems that have inspired them. This can be used for a class display.

Use this [Making Connections](#) graphic organiser to ask targeted questions about the connections made with the poem, Waiting.

Engaging Critically

[EN3-7C](#) | [ACELT1616](#) | [EN3-6B](#) | [ACELT1617](#) | [ACELA1525](#)

Research: Search through previous issues of The School Magazine collecting poetry texts. Students can add the poetry to the class display.

Create a [vocabulary template](#) for student work books. (Tip: Teachers to identify the correct definition for 'scoured' for this poem this will save time and confusion.)

Investigate the many ways this word is used and how its meaning is changed according to context by viewing [The Free Dictionary](#).

Analyse sentence structure. Val Neubecker, the poet who wrote Waiting, has deliberately reduced the words and punctuation to create a special effect. The shortened sentence structure is like a stream of consciousness showing us the rider is 'in the moment'. The sentences are pared back subjects and predicates. A subject is the noun or pronoun-based part of a sentence, and a predicate is the verb-based part that the subject performs. The first few are done here; students can complete the rest.

Subject	Predicate
wave	lifts me up
paddle	back
breath	hold
water	up nose
shore	race towards

Create your own Subject/Predicate Table based on an activity of your choosing.

Point of View. Illustrations are usually designed to embellish the story but can also give us additional information. One of the pleasures of viewing illustrations, is to decode the visual meanings.

Waiting is written in the first person, from the author's point of view, so the reader is seeing thinking and feeling from that perspective. However, in the visual text - the

illustration by Matt Ottley - we observe the rider, which makes the illustration third person point of view.

Discuss then write answers to these prompts in students writing journals.

Why is it important to see these texts so differently? The illustrator could have shown the viewpoint looking down at the surfer's feet, along the board and down at the wave.

Possible Answers

There is no point in saying the same thing twice.

It's more dramatic to see the whole wave from a distance as the rider's body in comparison to the wave gives the viewer an idea of scale.

The wave is all important, it is 'the hero' of this illustration. Viewers need to see the whole wave to fully appreciate the power and beauty of the perfect wave.

Gaps are important too. The placement of text performs two functions in the poem.

To separate the two parts of the poem, the waiting and finally the ride on the perfect wave.

The space between the columns draws the viewers eye to the wave itself, the wave that was 'so worth waiting for'.

Note: Students answers will vary as they view images from their own perspectives and make interpretations based on their backgrounds, values and emotional responses.

Experimenting

EN3-3A | [ACELA1524](#) | [EN3-7C](#) | [ACELT1618](#) | [EN3-2A](#) | [ACELT1800](#)

Waiting uses pared down sentences to show how the wave rider is thinking in the moment. The emotions are created from the sensory experience of being immersed in and carried by a surging wave. Readers can relate to the text by connecting their own experience to the sensations described.

Imagine you are in a different setting.

Make a list of the things you would find in this environment.

Write descriptions of these elements using the five senses.

Use the list of settings below to help with this prompt.

Inside a volcano, under a microscope, in the Sahara, in a collapsing mine, on a giant flower petal,

or **find** another [fantasy writing prompt](#)

Create illustrations that show different points of view. They could be from the point of view of a seagull flying overhead, or a shark viewing the board and rider from deep down under the wave.

Present to the class explaining how the image has changed the meaning of the poem.

Write about the importance of creating illustrations that communicate intentional as opposed to unintentional messages. For example, clown is used on packaging to communicate a 'fun' message. However, some people find a masked clown downright scary!

Further Reading

Asha, J (2018). [Teaching visual grammar in the context of digital texts](#). Scan, 37(7).