

A Pickle Indeed!

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

EN2-12E | ACELT1598

Create a list of textual elements to **evaluate** the text on a personal level.

Read the story as a class. Ask students to summarise the plot and ensure everyone understands the text. Then hand out copies of the table below.

Element	Answer	Personal Preference (Do you like it? Why or why not?)
Genre		
Characters and their personalities		
Setting		

Salient points		
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Ask students what 'genre' means (the type of book), and give examples of types of genres (e.g. mystery, adventure, comedy). Ask students what genre they think this story falls under. Answers may include adventure or even science fiction, as it is set on another planet and includes a spaceship. Ask students what other books or movies they've read that fall into the same genre (e.g. Harry Potter and Nevermoor might be included in adventure stories, while Star Wars and its spin offs are examples of science fiction stories). Ask students if they like those kinds of stories. Ensure they understand that it's OK to say no – this is all about personal preference. For example, some students may prefer genres such as contemporary, historical or comedy. Students are to fill out the first row in their table.

Next, students are to list the characters in the story (Bob, Ahab and Shasta). Turn to page nine and reread aloud from 'Shasta shook out her feathers' until the end. Ask students what the actions of the characters tell us about their personalities. Shasta coming all this way to get pickles might be considered passionate and adventurous, Ahab starting the ship might be considered brave and level-headed, while Bob could be considered creative for using a gherkin for a spregnockit, but also humorous for using puns ("never a dill moment"). Students fill out the box about the characters, then decide whether these are the sorts of characters they like in a story. If they don't like the characters, students should add what kind of characters they like, such as a grumpy person or a quiet individual.

Ask students where this story is set. Encourage a variety of answers – in space, on a spaceship, on a different planet, in a swamp. Ask students if they can think of any TV shows or movies where the setting is similar. What do they like about these sorts of settings? What do they dislike? Have students fill out the boxes in the "setting" row.

Finally, explain to students that salient points mean points that stand out in the story. Give the example of the fact that pickles are a salient point. Ask for any other examples (such as repairing a spaceship or being chased by a creature with tentacles). Students list two or three salient points in the box and decide whether

they like these points or not. Encourage students to think about whether they enjoy eating pickles, or the heart-racing plot, and to write down their opinions.

Now that the table has been filled out, students can write a summary of their opinions in their English books. They should reference some or all the points in the table. For example:

I like this story because I love stories set in space and on other planets. I like brave, adventurous characters and swamp monsters, so this was my kind of book!

Or

I didn't like this story because it was set in space. I prefer stories set in the real world, and I like comedies rather than adventure. I also hate pickles, which were a salient point in the story!

How to Hug a Slug

Poem by [Amy Dunjey](#) | illustrated by [David Legge](#)

EN2-6B | ACELY1677

Present a persuasive argument about whether to keep slugs as pets.

Read the poem as a class. Ask students to find evidence in the text that suggests how the poet feels about slugs. Students should identify phrases such as:

Slugs have but a simple wish,

To have a hug, a gentle squish

And and see he's cute and not so gross!

And He'll nuzzle in, a gentle hug

to make the argument that the poet finds slugs cute and cuddly.

Ask students if they agree with the author's viewpoint. Would they hug a slug? What about keeping slugs as pets? Create a table on the board with "For" on one side and "Against" on the other. Explain that in groups of threes, students need to produce at least six arguments for both sides of whether to keep a slug as a pet – they will not know what side they are arguing for until later. Give the class about ten minutes to brainstorm. They may look up information online, such as whether people can touch slugs with their bare hands and what role slugs play in the ecosystem. Remind students to consider their arguments from as many points of view as they can e.g., children, gardeners, zookeepers, bird owners (birds eat slugs), other pet owners (slugs are cheaper and easier to look after than dogs).

After students have produced at least six arguments for each side, assign each group as "For" or Against and give them time to choose their top three arguments. Each student in the group is to present one argument, and someone needs to open the presentation with a short explanation on what side they're arguing while someone else can conclude. Students may write down what they need to say and should include any facts or statistics they've found. They may use pictures or diagram to assist in their presentation.

If there's not enough time for whole class presentations, pair two groups with opposing arguments to present in front of each other.

A sample presentation of the Against argument is below.

STUDENT ONE: Today, our group will be arguing that you shouldn't keep slugs as pets. Firstly, it is not safe to touch slugs with your bare hands. Sometimes slugs carry parasites that can be passed on to other slugs or snails. This means you're passing diseases across the species. You can also be infected by the parasite yourself.

STUDENT TWO: Secondly, the reason you shouldn't keep slugs as pets is because they are a pest in the garden. Slugs eat all kinds of plants and herbs that your parents might be growing. Here is a picture showing what slug-eaten leaves look like (shows picture).

STUDENT THREE: Finally, another reason you shouldn't keep slugs as pets is because they are gross! They're slimy and sticky and, in my opinion, have weird eyes. (Shows picture of a slug.) Wouldn't you rather a soft, cuddly animal like a kitten or a puppy? In conclusion, slugs make terrible pets. Thank you.

Captain Ahab's Weird Wide World

The Honeyguide Bird

Article by Karen Jameyson | Photos by Alamy

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

Write a short article about an animal that helps humans.

Read the article as a class. Ask students what information the article gives about honeyguide birds. They should identify:

- what the honeyguide bird does
- why it helps humans
- what it looks like
- where it lives

Visit the site [Unsung Heroes: 10 Ways Animals Help Us](#) and go through the list. Individually, students select one animal from the list to write a short article in the same style as The Honeyguide Bird. For birds and dogs, students should choose one species of bird or dog and one aspect of how they help humans to focus on. Students should research the four points as above:

- what the animal does
- why it helps humans
- what it looks like
- where it lives

They need to use the relevant information from the [Unsung Heroes](#) article as their starting point. While a simple online search should be adequate to write the article, they can also visit [National Geographic Kids](#) for more information.



Super-Smell

Story by Elena de Roo | illustrated by [Aśka](#)

EN2-11D | ACELY1675

Identify the point of view for the story and **write** a short story using an alternative point of view.

Read the story as a class. Ask students who is telling the story. No name is mentioned in the text, but students should identify the character who refers to himself as I. Ask students to find the clue on page twelve that tells the reader the unnamed main character is a boy (the dad calls him 'son').

Explain that the story is written from first person point of view. This means the text uses I/me/we/us/mine. In this way, we don't get the character's name. Explain that some books use first person point of view and some use third person point of view, which refers to characters by their name and he/she/they etc. Remind students that when they write stories, they need to keep the same point of view throughout their work.

Ask how many characters students can find in the story. A close reading should find:

- the main character/narrator
- Mum
- Dad
- older brother Nikko
- older sister Callie
- Grandad
- Ivan from school
- dog Great Goody/Super-smell

Direct students to the dialogue and actions of each minor character and brainstorm what this tells them about the character. An overview can be found below.

Mum	Likes chocolate and tries to sneakily eat it when no kids are looking, gets her kids to do chores
Dad	Works on laptop, does Zoom meetings, busy and cranky at times
Nikko	Likes milk, thinks he can impress girls by burping
Callie	Has moved back home which implies she is old enough to have lived by herself, is embarrassed in front of her friends by her younger brothers
Grandad	Likes the paper and fish and chips, can't smell, makes up words, bad knees, big brown eyes
Ivan	Likes boiled egg, baked beans, banana and pickled onion sandwiches
Great Goody/Super-smell	Huge, goofy, gangly dog, smelly, lovely personality, big brown eyes

Using this information, students are to choose one of the minor characters and write a short story from their point of view. It needs to have something to do with the unnamed main character getting a new dog. (Students may make up a name for the unnamed character for their story.) Students can use first or third person point of view, but they must keep it the same throughout the story. Particularly creative students may write the story from the dog's point of view.

To help students get started, ask them what their chosen character might be doing when they find out the unnamed character is taking a smelly dog for walks. Ask how their chosen character might react to this e.g. Nikko and Ivan might be impressed, whereas Callie might be disgusted. Ask students if their character might be part of the Nose-clip gang, and what that could mean.

Mia Caught a Monster

Poem by Charles Ghinga | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

[EN2-4A](#) | [ACELA1486](#)

Write a poem using the homophones from the original text.

After reading the poem aloud to the class, ask students what a homophone is. Students should identify that it is a word that sounds the same but is spelt differently. Brainstorm homophones on the board. Common homophones: sea/see, wear/where/we're, there/they're/their, buy/bye, knew/new, son/sun, won/one, two/too/to.

If you have a digital subscription, you can complete the digital activity on Homophones

Tell students that there are at least two words that have homophones in every stanza (paragraph) of the poem (except the second stanza, which has none). Students work in pairs to find as many as they can.

Answers:

Stanza one: caught – court, reel – real

Stanza three: blue – blew, tail – tale

Stanza four: nose – knows, saw – sore, you – ewe

Stanza five: flew – flu, eye – I

Stanza six: night – knight, sight – site/cite

Stanza seven: pier – peer, here – hear

Stanza eight: night – knight, we're – where/wear

Invite students to write their answers on the board, so all the homophones from the poem are accessible. Go through the definitions of the homophones until students have a good understanding of their meanings.

Students are to write a poem about another monster using at least five of the homophone words. They can use a [rhyming dictionary](#) to assist them.

An example stanza:

There's a monster on the tennis court

I'll tell the tale, it's real,

No one knows except for me

The creature's shy, I feel.

(Homophones used: court, tale, knows, I)

Once finished, students read their work aloud to a partner.

Dogs are Intelligent Enough to Play Pass the Parcel

Story by Kesta Fleming | illustrated by [Kerry Millard](#)

[EN2-2A](#) | [ACELY1694](#)

Write the scientific method for the previous experiment mentioned in the text.

Read the story as a class. Ask students to discuss if they think this is a fiction or non-fiction text. Questions to prompt discussion:

- how is the text structure?
- does it use scientific language?
- is it believable?
- what is the purpose of the text?

Explain that the purpose of the text is to entertain rather than inform, and that the events in the text are invented. This makes the text fiction, with the non-fiction structure adding a unique element to the text.

Reread point three under the 'Results' subheading aloud, where it mentions that a previous experiment was titled 'Dogs have compassion'. Tell students that they will be writing this scientific method as if they were Marlow Brown, the narrator of 'Dogs are Intelligent Enough to Play Pass the Parcel'.

Ask the class how Marlow might have gone about testing whether Rockstar was compassionate. They can use the original text for ideas - the note that Rockstar howls when little kids cry suggests Marlow explored that avenue during the experiment. Answers may include: waiting at the park with Rockstar to see how he reacted when kids cried, Marlow crying on and off during various occasions and noting what Rockstar did, keeping a daily feelings journal that corresponds with Rockstar's behaviour.

Once students have individually decided how Marlow completed the experiment, view the YouTube video [The Steps of the Scientific Method for Kids](#) to get a quick explanation of what is needed. Ask students to identify the elements in the original text:

- the hypothesis (written as a statement not a question)
- the equipment (listed as dot points)
- the method (listed as steps)
- the results (listed as numbered points)
- the conclusion (written as a statement)

Students are to use the same template for their own scientific method writeup. Encourage creativity, reminding students the purpose of this text is to entertain. Illustrations can be added to enhance the presentation of the writeup.

Bear, the Koala Rescue Dog

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

EN2-9B | ACELA1479

Organise the text into key paragraph features using the hamburger template (topic sentence, detail sentences, closing sentence) and **write** a new paragraph.

Before the lesson, download one of the hamburger templates from Reading Rocket's [Paragraph Hamburger](#) page and copy enough for each student.

Ask the class what they know about paragraph structure. Ensure students understand that paragraphs should have a topic sentence, a few detail sentences and a closing sentence. Display your chosen hamburger template from Reading Rocket's [Paragraph Hamburger](#) page. Explain the hamburger template – the topic and closing sentences are the buns and the detail sentences are the filling.

Direct students to the first paragraph under the subheading Wildlife detection dogs (it starts with 'In Australia' and ends with 'scent of their fur'). Ask students how they know where the paragraph starts and ends. Explain that a new paragraph will start on a new line and the first line will be be indented (spaced slightly right). Ask students to identify where each paragraph of the text begins in the body of the article (not the opening and concluding paragraphs).

Answers:

In Australia

Bear's usual job

Many koalas

As soon as

Bear's command

If the koala

All the koalas

A dog's sense

Bear's first owners

Bear's owners knew

Assign each student to different paragraphs. Students use their paragraph to fill out the hamburger template. They can copy the topic and closing sentences in the buns and the detail sentences in the filling. When finished, students check their answers with a partner.

Ask students if they can summarise the text into one paragraph. Encourage them to think of what the topic sentence will be, brainstorm some important points from the article and ask how they can close their paragraph. Depending on ability levels, this can be scaffolded as:

- guided writing
- giving the first few words of each sentence
- brainstorming as a class then allowing students to complete their paragraph independently

An example is provided below.

TOPIC: Bear is a rescue dog for koalas who were injured during the bushfires.

DETAILS: His first owners couldn't control him, so they gave him to a shelter. A dog handler trained him to find a koala's scent and lead them to the koala.

CLOSING: Bear has saved over 100 koalas.

Summer Morning

Story by [Lisa Varchol Perron](#) | Illustrated by Amy Golbach

[EN2-8B](#) | [ACELA1483](#)

Design an illustration to go with the text.

Without showing the illustration, read the poem to the class. Tell students to imagine they've been hired by the magazine to illustrate the poem. Ask what kinds of things they'll need to think about when planning their illustration. Sample answers include:

- the subject/s of the illustration (who will be in the picture)
- the style (cartoon/realistic)
- the colours
- the layout (placement of the poem in relation to the illustration)
- angles and shot distance

Give some specific suggestions as to what the children could design, such as:

- looking down through a window into the kitchen with Nana and the children, as if from the birds' point of view
- a close-up cartoon picture of the birds in the trees with the sun rising behind them
- Nana in a tree, waking the birds who are sleeping in their nests

Ask students what kind of feeling the poem evokes, and how they can convey this feeling to their audience. If they feel it is a gentle, happy poem, suggest they could use warm pastel colours. If they feel it is bright and energetic, they could use vivid colours with a cartoon style. Remind students this is a personal choice, as they might each feel differently about the poem, and there are no right or wrong answers when it comes to personal feelings.

In their books or on scrap paper, students divide their page into quarters and sketch a different design for their illustration in each quadrant. Hand out copies of the

poem for students to think about placement. Ask if they will weave the poem through the illustration or have the poem to one side. Once finished, have students discuss with a partner which design they prefer and why. Partners are allowed to ask questions or make suggestions, although the student doesn't have to take these suggestions on.

Once a decision is made, students sketch out their chosen design on A4 paper. They can either handwrite the poem around the illustration or cut out the copied version.

After students have completed their illustrations, they can view the official illustration in the magazine. Ask what they think about the illustrator's choices and compare it to their own, having them note down what's the same, what's different, and which they prefer.

Students can do a self-evaluation at the end by completing the four sentences below.

Something I learnt was...

What I did well...

What I would do differently next time...

My overall thoughts on the activity...

Zack Saves the Toy Shop

Story by [Kathryn England](#) | Illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

EN2-11D | ACELT1596

Design a poster or display using recycled materials to promote sustainability inspired by Zack's idea for fixing broken toys.

Read the story as a class. Ask students the following questions:

- Was Zack's solution to the shop a good idea?
- Why is it better to fix toys rather than buy new ones?
- Where do things go after we throw them in the bin?
- Why do we recycle?
- What might happen if we stopped recycling?
- What might happen if we bought new things all the time?

Students probably won't have a full understanding of the answers at this point, but encourage them to think about what happens when they throw old toys – especially electronics – in the bin in order to buy the latest products.

Students can view this short YouTube video on [consumerism](#). Michael Speechley's book *The All New Must Have Orange 430* also touches on the themes of overconsumption.

Explain that Zack's idea to fix toys instead of selling new ones is a great way to help the planet. Ask students what things that have been set up at school or at home that also help save the planet. Brainstorm other things children could do. Suggested ideas:

- Start or participate in recycling programs in the school such as paper/cardboard collections, bottle collections and bread tag collections
- Grow their own vegetable patch

- Start or participate in No-Plastic Tuesdays
- Become power rangers i.e. ensure lights and computers are switched off at the end of the day
- Run an old-toy day, where students bring in old toys to sell or swap to other students

In small groups, students choose one of their ideas to promote around the school. Ask students how they might create posters without using new paper. Suggest using scrap paper/newspapers/magazines instead. They might also choose to create a display using cardboard boxes/tubes or anything else in the recycling bin. For example, using an old cardboard box to hold a miniature garden would be an interesting way to promote starting a school vegetable patch.

For tips on how to make a good poster, students can view the YouTube video [How to design a fabulous poster](#). The five tips in the video are:

1. Keep it simple.
2. Draw a sketch first.
3. Prioritise (important points need to be bigger).
4. Pick your media.
5. Don't clash too many colours/fonts.

The Donkey's Shadow

Retold by Karen Jameyson | Illustrated by Nadia Attlee

EN2-5A | ACELA1827

Identify spelling patterns with common suffixes and **apply** these patterns to invented words.

Read the story. Ask students to define a verb (doing word) and ask them to find examples in the text. Write them on the board. Some examples: decided, sizzling, carry, trudging, blazed. Ask students how they can tell which verbs are in past tense, and which are in present. Students should recognise that verbs ending in 'ed' often tell us it has happened in the past (such as decided), while words ending in 'ing' can often be identified as happening right now (such as trudging).

Take the two verbs that describe what the sun is doing – sizzling and blazed – and use a thesaurus or online thesaurus such as [Merriam-Webster](#) to find synonyms of these words. It's best to choose words with different endings so students can identify the spellings rules for various suffixes. Examples are: fry, hiss, hum, pop, swish, shine, blast, flare.

Students are to use these words to fill out the table below. Before they begin, ask students:

- what do we do with a word that ends in 'e' when we add 'ing'?
- what do we do with the final 'y' when we add 'es' and 'ed'?
- do we add an 's' or an 'es' for words that end in 'ss' and 'sh'?
- what do we do for one-syllable words ending in a vowel-consonant when adding 'ing' and 'ed'?

	add 'es/s'	add 'ing'	add 'ed'
sizzle			
blaze			
fry			

hiss			
hum			
pop			
swish			
shine			
burst			
flare			

Answers:

	add 'es/s'	add 'ing'	add 'ed'
sizzle	sizzles	sizzling	sizzled
blaze	blazes	blazing	blazed
fry	fries	frying	fried
hiss	hisses	hissing	hissed
hum	hums	humming	hummed
pop	pops	popping	popped
swish	swishes	swishing	swished
shine	shines	shining	shined
blast	blasts	blasting	blasted
flare	flares	flaring	flared

Ask students to write down the rules they used to fill out the table. They should come up with something like the rules below.

1. Drop the 'e' when adding 'ing'
2. Change the 'y' to an 'i' when adding 'es' and 'ed'
3. Add an 'es' for words ending in 'ss' and 'sh'
4. Only add a 'd' not an 'ed' for words that already end in 'e'
5. Double the last letter for one-syllable words ending in a vowel-consonant when adding 'ed' and 'ing'
6. Keep the 'y' when adding 'ing'
7. Words that end in two consonants don't need to be changed when adding suffixes

Remind students that these are general rules and there are often exceptions, but these rules are what they'll be using for the next activity.

Students fill out a new table, this time with the invented words below. They must use their spelling rules to add the suffix.

	add 'es/s'	add 'ing'	add 'ed'
jop			
yush			
kly			
nuze			
pess			

Answers:

	add 'es/s'	add 'ing'	add 'ed'
jop	jops	jopping	jopped
yush	yushes	yushing	yushed
kly	klies	klyinh	klied
nuze	nuzes	nuzing	nuzed
pess	pesses	pepping	pepped

A Colourful Race

Play by Sue Murray | Illustrated by Cheryl Orsini

EN2-10C | ACELT1594

Compare the play with an Aboriginal Dreamtime story.

As a class, read the play. Ask students what they think the purpose of this story is. Explain that while the play is meant to entertain, stories like this are also ways for various cultures to explain certain things in the world, like the reason for formations of mountains, lakes, thunderstorms, constellations etc. Point out that this play is a folktale that has been retold by Sue Murray.

Watch the YouTube video [How the Birds Got Their Colours](#). Ask students if they notice any similarities between this story and the play.

Students use the [Paired Passage Graphic Organiser](#) on page 19 to identify similarities and differences between the two texts. For similarities, encourage them to think about the kindness of the parrot in both stories, the cruelty of the crow/rat leading to their dull colouring, how the characters' colours were dull at first but became bright after a certain event. For differences, tell them to think about the text type (play versus narrative) where the story was set, what animals were involved and what the problem and solution was.

Extension one: Students get into four groups – two groups present the play for A Colourful Race and two groups create and present a play for How the Birds Got Their Colours.

Extension two: Students write A Colourful Race in story format and paint simple illustrations based on the book in the video [How the Birds Got Their Colours](#).