

Will Wonders Never Cease? Stinging Trees

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

[EN2-9B](#) | [ACELA1493](#)

Learning Intention:

I am learning how the meaning of sentences can be enhanced using noun groups so that I can understand how objects sometimes do not match their stereotypical representation.

Success Criteria:

- I can define the term stereotype.
- I can explain the stereotypical representation of a common thing (a tree).
- I can analyse how the article uses noun groups to create a different representation of the same common thing.

Essential Knowledge:

More information about how there are individual depictions of a word can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Representation](#).

An explanation of noun groups can be found on the NSW Education site [Nouns](#).

The Collins Dictionary entry on [Stereotype](#) provides a good foundation for introducing the idea in Stage 2.

Prior to stationary reading the article, complete a modified version of the activity in the English Textual Concepts Representation video. Using mini-whiteboards, interactive presentation software such as [Mentimeter](#), or simply on paper, ask students to record their impressions of trees using the following categories:

- Colours associated with trees
- Words associated with trees
- Feelings associated with trees
- An image of a tree.

As a class, or in groups, students should compare their personal depiction of a tree. Note elements of difference but also identify and emphasise common trends in the depictions. These may include: associations with lush green colours, words like fresh, shady, cool, and feelings like peace and optimism.

Explain to students that these trends in representation reflect stereotypical ideas about trees rather than reality. You may then wish to show students the Google Image or YouTube search results for the word 'tree' or 'tree + nature' to confirm that in the popular imagination, trees are a symbol of shelter and relaxation.

Read the article as a class. Observe the difference between the class's stereotypical representation of trees to the representation of stinging trees in the article. Students may notice that stinging trees: are aggressive (they inject venom), the venom is extremely painful, the pain can last for months.

Explain that the author has used noun groups to enrich her description of stinging trees. Find examples of noun groups in the article:

"tiny, sharp hairs found on their leaves and stems"

"like hot acid and electric shock"

"highly-venomous leaves, covered with stinging hairs"

Finally, introduce the activity of Word Chains so that students can write their own sentences about stinging trees, containing a rich noun group. Start with the noun phrase 'stinging trees'. Place this word in the middle of a page, ideally accompanied by a picture. Students then surround the image with adjectives to describe the noun. For example: emerald + spade + spiky + crowded.

This chain of words can be turned into a rich sentence containing a noun group:

The emerald, spade-shaped, spiky leaves crowded the stinging plant.

Assessment as/of learning:

[Imaginative Text Rubrics](#) can be found on The School Magazine website. Students can use these rubrics as success criteria in the crafting of their imaginative writing via anchor charts. The rubrics can also be used to provide structure for peer or teacher assessment.

Phantoms of Madagascar

part two of a two-part story by [Geoffrey McSkimming](#) | illustrated by [Peter Sheehan](#)

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

Learning Intention:

I am learning how text structures work in detective stories so that I can locate and analyse the effect of clues in a narrative.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify and explain the features of the mystery genre and a detective story.

- I can locate and track the significance of clues in a narrative.
- I can embed clues within my own narrative.

Essential Knowledge:

More information about how audiences can expect certain patterns in a text can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Genre](#).

Before reading, revise the key features of the mystery genre by rewatching and reviewing the YouTube clip [How to Plan a Detective Story](#). Ensure that students are confident with the function of clues in a mystery. Explicitly teach the idea that a clue is a piece of information that, if interpreted correctly, allows the reader to crack the case with the detective, or sometimes even before them.

Explain that as students reread Part 1 and then read Part 2 of the story, they must be on the look out for clues. The structure of the story invites the reader to play the role of the detective alongside Jools and Vern. Explain that the mystery within this story is about phantoms who appear to be stealing Mrs Sayers's pens. Jools, Vern and the reader need to work out who the phantoms are and why they are stealing stationery.

Read the story aloud to the students, or if you have a digital subscription, listen to the audio recording. While you should read Part 1 in its entirety, stop reading Part 2 at the end of page 10 so that students can think of their own solutions before the mystery is revealed.

Create a class list of clues presented in the story. Below is a complete list of clues. Students may not identify all these clues yet. Take note of the clues not yet spotted to address later in the activity.

- The pens disappear from Mrs Sayers's desk.
- There are shadows moving outside her window.
- The pens have disappeared more than 50 times.
- It only happens at night.
- She stores her pens in a cardboard box in a cupboard in her office.
- The pen (*Inksplurter 4*) is long and purple with a black cover.
- The black cover/sheath gives a good grip.
- It also has tiny rough nodules.
- When she writes she plonks herself heavily onto her chair.
- She then pulls out half a dozen sheets of paper from the pile.
- She has a break after one and a half hours to make a cup of peppermint tea.
- When she comes back her pen has been stolen and the shadows have appeared.

- When she writes she always wears her most comfortable garment, a 'big, baggy, dark green woollen cardigan'.
- The cardigan has recently become less comfortable.
- It has also become stretched and distorted.
- She places her arms on the desk to get up to make her cup of tea.

Using the list of clues, ask students to come up with various explanations for the mystery. Challenge students to beat the detectives Jools and Vern to it.

Read the conclusion to the story and uncover the mystery: when Mrs Sayers places her arms on the table to stand up, the *Inksplurter 4* grips to the undersides of the arms of her cardigan. The phantoms are the shadows of the palm trees outside the window.

Present the complete list of clues to the class. Highlight the clues that students identified in their first reading of the text. Read the story for a second time and locate the more subtle clues (such as the nodules on her pens, or the changes to her cardigan).

Finally, to consolidate student understanding of the use of clues in mystery stories ask students to return to the detective story they planned in the Learning Resource for 'The Phantoms of Madagascar Part One'. Instruct students to embed a range of clues into their original story.

Animal Animation

poem by Shan O'Shea | illustrated by Sarah Davis

[EN2-1A | ACELY1687](#)

Learning Intention:

I am learning how to listen for key points in a spoken text so that I can create a visual representation of the poem.

Success Criteria:

- I can attentively listen to a poem and identify key details.
- I can visually represent key details in the poem.
- I can compare my representation with those of my peers.

Essential Knowledge:

More information about how representations vary and can depend on experience and context can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Representation](#).

Before introducing the poem to students, play the ice breaker game '[Describe It, Draw It](#)'. In this activity, students will complete a drawing in partners. One partner will describe the images on their sheet. The other partner will draw what their partner describes. They cannot

see the illustration and must rely on their partner's description. After they have drawn their representation of the image, they compare it with the original.

After the ice breaker, explain that students will be conducting a similar activity on one of the poems in the magazine. However, explain that the task will be more challenging, and the results will be more varied. This is because students will have to make choices about how they represent the characters and objects in the poem. Differentiate between an object that is represented neutrally, like a shape (circle, square, triangle) and an object like a dragon. The representation of a dragon will depend on the person's experiences (have they read a book or watched a film about a particular dragon) and their cultural background (Chinese dragons look different to Welsh dragons).

Listen to the audio recording of the poem once so that students can grasp an understanding of its overall meaning. This is a nonsense poem which shows the unlimited nature of a child's imagination as the animal the speaker invents is a highly creative combination of animal features and everyday objects.

Read the poem again, slowly. Ask students to write down the key points that stick out to them and that they will include in their visual representation of their animal. Students are likely to identify the concrete details: dozen eyes or more, railway track, buttons for toes, etc.

You may wish to read the poem a few more times as necessary so that students have a good grasp of the details in the poem.

Provide students with time to draw a detailed representation of the animal. Students should add colour and label the features of their animal.

Provide students with a written copy of the poem. Students identify the details that they overlooked. Many of these may be vaguer statements such as the fact that the animal is 'fast and fierce and tall'. Collect a class list of key points that were not included in students' representations using interactive software such as [Mentimeter](#).

Finally, students should compare their representation to Sarah Davis's illustration. Discuss whether her representation of the animal is scary or welcoming (answers will vary, though students are likely to identify its friendly facial expression). Then discuss her choice of background and the mood it represents (night by a swamp with jagged rocks in the background, suggesting that while the animal might appear friendly, it is still fierce and dangerous).

Assessment as/of learning:

Once students have completed their representation, conduct a [gallery walk](#) so that they can compare the way that they and their peers visually represented the poem.

Moonstruck

story by Emma Cameron | illustrated by [Andrew Joyner](#)

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

Learning Intention:

I am learning how to represent characters in interesting ways so that I can discuss how authors use characterisation to create an engaging story.

Success Criteria:

- I can define characterisation.
- I understand how an author uses the technique of 'show don't tell' when developing a character.
- I can apply the principle of 'show don't tell' in my own writing.

Essential Knowledge:

More information about how the representation of a character is determined by the composer can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Representation](#).

An explanation of the principle of 'show don't tell' and a series of activities to introduce inferential thinking can be found on the NSW Education Page [Stage 3 reading – Inference](#).

Before reading the story as a class, define the term characterisation (taken from the NSW Curriculum [Glossary](#)):

The technical construction and representation of any personality or person-like figure in text, including features such as their appearance, actions, words or thoughts.

Ensure that students understand that a character is constructed by an author who makes deliberate choices to represent them in certain ways. Then explain that the author of this story has deliberately represented the sister of the narrator as very emotional and boy-crazy, stereotypical teenage traits.

Read through the story, ensuring that students pay particular attention to the characterisation of Annabel. After reading, ask students to share their initial impression of Annabel's character traits (how they look, act and feel). Students might include words such as bossy, grumpy or moody.

Explain that the way successful authors construct a character is through the writing principle of 'show don't tell'. This means that writers use sensory details to construct their characters, rather than just telling us what their characters are like. The reader then has to make inferences to understand the characters.

Use a think aloud strategy to demonstrate how 'show don't tell' works. A sample think aloud script is below:

'Good writers don't 'tell us' all the information about characters, they 'show us'. When I read the excerpt:

'When Ben's sister was unhappy her face drooped like saggy old underwear. If Annabel was sad, it made Ben feel like everything happened in slow motion.'

I can make some inferences about Annabel. We can see that she has very strong emotions. We can infer this from the description that compares her to saggy underwear. This suggests that when she is unhappy, she shows it very clearly on her frowning face. The author also hints that Annabel's emotions are so strong that other people can feel them, such as Ben who says that Annabel's unhappiness makes things feel like slow motion.'

Next, explain to students that they will make more specific judgements on the representation of Annabel through identifying evidence in the text. Provide students with the following table:

Character name	Evidence from the text	Visual representation of the evidence	Inferred character traits
Annabel	"The air around her would spark and crackle"		
	"Her eyes sparkled as she watched a boy strolling along."		
	"Annabel's eyes trawled the beach."		
	"Annabel's eyes blazed black."		
	"Annabel snarled and stormed to her room."		

If you have a digital subscription, you may want to supplement this activity with an interactive sequencing task in which students place visual representations of Annabel's mood in the order they appear in the story.

Finally, ask students to think about how the character of Matty Hansom would be represented if the story was written from Annabel's point of view. Ask students what language the author has deliberately used to represent Matty as a popular guy (his last name Hansom sounds the same as handsome). The author would need to choose words that make him seem cool and attractive. He should also be compared to favourable things.

Students should write a paragraph from the point of view of Annabel. This paragraph should show the reader that Matty is the most popular boy in town and receives lots of attention from the teenage girls. It should use a combination of language with positive connotations and favourable comparisons.

For example:

It was like the clouds parted and the sun blazed down on the beach. Matty Hansom had arrived. He was our very own Ken, with his perfect hair and teeth. His clothing looked like it was from an Instagram influencer's page. I wish I could be his Barbie, but every time he looked my way it was as if his eyes turned to stone, and he didn't see me.

Assessment as/of learning:

[Imaginative Text Rubrics](#) can be found on The School Magazine website. Students can use these rubrics as success criteria in the crafting of their imaginative texts via anchor charts. The rubrics can also be used to provide structure for peer or teacher assessment.

Sunset Sundae

poem by Diana Murray | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

[EN2-2A | ACELT1606](#)

Learning Intention:

I am learning how authors use nonsense representations of the world to make texts engaging, fresh and playful.

Success Criteria:

- I can define the term 'nonsense poetry'.
- I can identify how a poet uses figurative language to create a nonsensical representation of the weather.
- I can experiment with figurative language to create my own nonsense poetry.

Essential Knowledge:

More information about common figurative devices used in poetry can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Connotation, Imagery and Symbol](#).

Read the poem as a class, or if you have a digital subscription listen to the audio recording. Display the illustration as you read the poem. After reading, ask students what they notice about the text. Observations could include:

- It is a poem because it has short lines
- It rhymes
- It compares the weather with desserts (students may use the terms similes, metaphors and personification)
- It is a funny sounding poem as the comparisons are very unusual.

Introduce students to the definition of nonsense poetry. The Britannica entry on [nonsense verse](#) can be simplified for student understanding. Students should know that nonsense verse is humorous and whimsical, often contains made up words, is mostly written for children and usually does not have a rational explanation.

Create a nonsense poetry checklist containing the above devices. Then instruct students to find these features in 'Sunset Sundae'. Also explain to students that the poem contains examples of imagery – a feature that appears in many forms of poetry. Adjust scaffolding as required so that students can identify the examples in the poem.

Poetic devices	Appears in the text	Example
Humour and whimsy	✓	The sky is compared to dessert items 'The sun's a lemon gumdrop'
Made up words	✗	No, it only contains real words
Written for children	✓	Yes, it is short and uses simple language
No rational explanation	✓ and ✗	Yes and no, there are not really sweets in the sky, but it does create a vivid picture of sunsets
Simile	✓	"Glassy ocean sparkles like a great big sundae cup"
Metaphor	✓	"Cherry ice cream sky"
Personification	✓	"Night-time grows so hungry that it eats the sunset up."

Explain to students that while the poem does not contain all the devices used in nonsense poetry, it contains enough of them that the poem can still be considered nonsense verse.

Finally, instruct students to construct their own nonsense verse by following the steps below:

1. Write a few sentences about doing something very ordinary. 'Sunset Sundae' describes watching a sunset. Other examples could include eating dinner or catching a school bus.
2. Think of some of your favourite, funny sounding words. Or make some funny sounding words up. (The book '[Pool! *and other words that make me laugh](#)' is an excellent resource for writing nonsense poetry.
3. Then think of some comparisons between your chosen topic and another topic. For example, eating dinner could be a battle between yourself and the food which is trying to escape.
4. Substitute some of the words in your original sentences with your fancy vocabulary and crazy comparisons. Or completely rewrite the poem!

For example:

I sat down to a dinner. I was famished. First, I tried to eat the roast beef, it was tough and chewy. The mashed potato was watery and slipped through my fork. The peas rolled all over my plate.

The above example can turn into the following nonsense poem:

Dinner has become a battle.

As I try to eat my roasted cattle.

Tough and chewy like leather.

My knife is as useless as a feather.

I swap to the potato mash.

But it's a river, Splish! Splash!

Everywhere

It's in my hair

Do I dare

To eat the peas

They're on their knees

Doing what they please

I guess I'll rest my head

In bed

Hungry instead.

Assessment as/of learning:

Students can conduct a nonsense poetry slam. Students rehearse their poems, considering how they can use exaggerated tone, facial expressions and body language to enhance the whimsy of their poems.

Fairy Floss from a Dentist?

article by Mina | illustrated by Fifi Coulson | photos by Photo source Alamy

[EN2-4A](#) | [ACELY1686](#)

Learning Intention:

I am learning how to identify language and visual features of texts written or set in earlier times so that I can compose a short work of historical fiction.

Success Criteria:

- I can see how the experiences described in texts compare and contrast to my own life experiences.
- I can define the term historical context.
- I can make connections between a text and its historical context.
- I can use details of historical context in my own writing.

Essential Knowledge:

More information about how audiences can expect certain patterns in a text can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Genre](#).

More information about the relationship between texts and contexts can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Context](#).

Prior to reading the text, ask students a series of prediction questions about the subject of the article, fairy floss. Questions may include:

- Have you had fairy floss before?
- Where did you buy it from?
- What flavours were available?
- Was it an exciting treat, or nothing special?
- Would you be allowed to eat it regularly? Why or why not?

Collect and display the class answers to these questions on interactive presentation software such as [Mentimeter](#). Explain that the answers given reflect aspects of our modern Australian context (purchasing fairy floss at events like carnivals and shows, the wide range of flavours available, its relatively low cost and the common belief that it is really unhealthy).

Define the term historical context: what life was like for people who lived at a certain time. It might include considerations of the social structure, politics, economics and cultural factors. It also includes geography, such as where in the world events took place. Explain to students that they have considered their own context when it comes to fairy floss. They will now read an article on the same topic, but with a very different historical context.

As you read the article, ask students to locate and record five amazing facts about fairy floss at the St Louis World Fair of 1904. (Suggested resource: they can collate this information on the [Five Amazing Facts Worksheet](#)). Compile a class list of these facts.

Next, outline the students' creative task. They will imagine that they are a young person travelling to the World Fair in 1904. They will describe their experience seeing, purchasing and tasting fairy floss for the first time. They will write in the historical fiction genre, using details from the article and their research.

Provide students with a list of the patterns in the historical fiction genre. Then instruct students to view the clip [St Louis World Fair 1904](#), paying close attention to clothing, exhibits, attractions, attitudes and customs of the time. Students can use the table below to plan their story. Some examples are below:

Historical Fiction Genre

Pattern	Will it appear in your story?	Example
Characters act appropriate for the time period	✓	Attend a variety of exhibits in the world fair. Sense of wonder and awe at the attractions.
Specific vocabulary from the time period is included	✓	Electrical machine, candy manufacturer, prototype
Set in a specific place during a specific time in history	✓	April 1904, St Louis World Fair
Includes details, traditions and societal norms of the time period	✓	Girls wore long dresses with large collars and ribbons in their hair.
Combines real details with fictional characters and events	✓	Inventors: William Morrison and John Wharton. The cost was 25c, which was half the price of the ticket to the fair.

Prior to writing their narrative, you may like to show students examples of historical novels. Some text suggestions appear on the Readings Recommended [Australian History Picture Books](#) list.

Provide students with time to write their historical narrative, before they share it with peers, the class or publish it on a digital platform.

Assessment as/of learning:

After students have written their own historical narrative, you may wish to read the novel ["Meet Me at the Fair!" Fairy Floss: The Sweet Story of Cotton Candy](#) by Ann Ingalls, a picture book with the same premise as the writing task.

Students can construct a success criteria based on the features of this book. They can then use the success criteria to self-assess their work.

All Ways

play by David Hill | illustrated by [Aśka](#)

[EN2-4A](#) | [ACELY1691](#)

Learning Intention:

I am learning how to use text processing strategies to monitor meaning in a text so that I can read a drama script with appropriate fluency and expression.

Success Criteria:

- I can explain what the text processing strategy 'monitoring meaning' refers to.
- I can implement this strategy when I am reading a text.
- I can use this strategy to read a text with fluency and expression.

Essential Knowledge:

This play personifies three different thinking processes in the brain (Noway, Everyway, Whichway). You may wish to conduct a [Perspectives](#) activity using the Digital Learning Selector resources to frontload the concepts of an individual having diverse viewpoints.

To encourage students to experiment with vocal expression, play the game '[Say it Another Way](#)'. Give students a range of prompt cards for the way they should deliver the nursery rhyme 'Humpty Dumpty'. For example, 'say it as if you are in a hurry' or 'say it as if you are reading the news on the television'.

Prior to reading the text, explicitly teach the students the metacognitive comprehension strategy 'monitoring meaning'. This strategy requires students to keep track of what they understand as they read the text and, conversely, what they do not understand. As students read, they should be monitoring whether they can identify the main idea, outline the arguments presented, or in the case of the play 'All Ways' explain the differences between the characters Noway, Everyway and Whichway. Explain to students that good readers can identify when they are confused by a text and have a range of strategies to remedy this confusion.

Read the play aloud with different class members assuming roles. After reading, call on volunteers to distinguish between the three characters. Students are likely to find this a challenging task after only one read-through of the text. This is because the characters' different perspectives are only expressed through short sentences about vague topics. There are no specific events in this play, nor are the characters described as being different in their physical appearance.

Provide students with a range of strategies to monitor meaning. Choose strategies that suit the needs of your class. Suggested monitoring strategies include:

- Re-read the text. As students read, they have three columns, one for each character. They write down adjectives that describe their character traits. For example, Noway could be described as rude 'Goodbye' and difficult 'Don't want to'; Everyway could be described as positive 'You're so right' and open-minded 'You're both right'; Whichway could be described as confused 'About what?' and not a very good listener 'Is what right?'
- Re-read the text. As students read, they highlight the key words that indicate each of the character's personalities in a different colour. These colours could represent the overall tone of the character (Noway could be red for aggressive, Everyway could be yellow for positivity, Whichway could be grey for confusion).
- Re-read the text. As students read, they draw your impression of the character with a focus on their facial expressions and body language.

Once students have conducted a monitoring strategy, conduct another class discussion that identifies the differences between the three characters.

Finally, break the class into groups of six. This will allow each group member to adopt a role in the play. Using their knowledge of the differences between the characters, students adopt the appropriate tone of voice to reflect their characteristics. For example:

- Brainwave is likely to speak slowly and with a deep voice.
- The hosts are likely to be upbeat and engaging.
- Noway is likely to have a sharp, negative tone of voice.
- Everyway is likely to speak with a fast pace with an upbeat tone.
- Whichway is likely to speak with a slow pace, confused tone and possibly an upwards inflection.

Night Lives

story by David Hill | illustrated by [Cheryl Orsini](#)

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

Learning Intention:

I am learning the process of planning, drafting and publishing so that I can write an engaging imaginative text.

Success Criteria:

- I can consider the stereotypical representation of animals in literature.
- I can develop my own representation of an animal.
- I can compose my own text, in the style of 'Night Lives' exploring the nocturnal experience of an animal.

Essential Knowledge:

More information about how authors representations may reflect stereotypes rather than actuality can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Representation](#).

More information about how authors write with distinctive features can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Style](#).

Before reading the story, conduct a class discussion around the common (or stereotypical) representation of cats in children's literature. You may wish to read a range of texts about cats to structure ideas for the discussion. Suggested texts include:

- The works of Lynley Dodd (Scarface Claw, Slinky Malinky)
- Judith Kerr's series on Mog, the Forgetful Cat
- Rebel Cats! Brave Tales of Feisty Felines by Kimberlie Hamilton

Create a class list of common representations of cat characteristics. These may include: independent, solitary, sometimes aggressive, food orientated, physically gifted, lazy, hostile towards other animals.

Read 'Night Lives'. After reading, compare the representation of Mig the cat to other cats in literature through completing a [Venn Diagram](#) as a class. Areas of commonality may include: Mig is also a solitary creature who enjoys her independence, she does not get along with other animals (including other cats), her owner thinks that she is lazy. There are also some areas of difference, Mig seems to be motivated by adventure rather than food and she is not interested in chasing mice and pigeons.

Explain to students that authors will often be inspired by stereotypical representations of an animal, but will make their characters a bit out of the ordinary to ensure that their story is engaging.

Create a list of the other characters that Mig encounters in her night adventure. These include: possums, the neighbour's cat, an annoyed neighbour, a mouse, an owl-nightjar, Daisy the bulldog, pigeons, another dog, the paper delivery girl and her owner.

Instruct students to select one of the animal characters mentioned. They will plan, draft and then compose a story based on this animal's nighttime experiences.

First students should list all the stereotypical representations of that animal. For example, students could be inspired by the representation of possums in Mem Fox's 'Possum Magic' and plan a character that is wise, interested in food but also needs to be wary of predators. Encourage students to add details to their character that are not included in that animal's stereotypical representation. For example, students could focus on the growling and hissing sounds that possums make, which reflects the actuality of possums, rather than their cute stereotypical representation.

Next, students plan their story around the following structure:

- Describe where the animal is at the beginning of the story. What is their home like?

- List three activities, locations and interactions that the animal has over the course of the evening.
- Describe what the animal does at dawn. Consider whether your animal is nocturnal, crepuscular or diurnal.

Provide students with time to compose and then review and edit their story prior to publishing.

Assessment as learning:

[Imaginative Text Rubrics](#) can be found on The School Magazine website. Students can use these rubrics as success criteria in the crafting of their imaginative writing via anchor charts. The rubrics can also be used to scaffold and sequence the editing and publishing process by providing the structure for peer or teacher assessment.

The Legend is You

poem by Monique Mulligan | illustrated by [Anna Bron](#)

[EN2-8B](#) | [ACELA1496](#)

Learning Intention:

I am learning how to use metalanguage to examine visual texts so that I can understand the effects of the illustrator's choices.

Success Criteria:

- I can define the following terms: salience and reading path.
- I can recognise the written aspects of the text that reveal cultural elements such as beliefs, traditions and customs.
- I can consider the traditional components of Chinese theatre and how these impact upon the performance of the script.

Essential Knowledge:

More information on the commonly understood arrangement of text types (including visual texts) can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Code and Convention](#).

Read the poem aloud to the class or listen to the audio recording. As students listen, they should record the number of legendary creatures listed (eight in total).

On the second listening, students should try to record as many of these creatures as they can, in the correct sequence. Then as a class write down, in order, the creatures, providing background information as required.

Listen to the poem again. This time, provide students with a copy of the text, without Anna Bron's illustration. Ask students to visualise the poem as they listen to it.

Explicitly teach two visual literacy terms:

- Salience / salient image: the element of the image that stands out and is the first thing that grabs the viewer's attention
- Reading pathways: the path a viewer takes through a text, from most to least salient image

Extension: you may also want to teach the term vector:

- Vector: a line that leads the viewer's gaze from one part of the image to another

Explain that this is a tricky poem to illustrate. This is because there are eight mythical creatures mentioned, so the illustrator needs to consider which creature will be the salient image and how to place the creatures to create an effective reading path.

Instruct students to construct their own illustration of the poem, considering salience and reading path. The illustration could be completely hand drawn, or students could use a collage technique and incorporate sourced images of the creatures. Students should complete their illustration individually and secretly. Conduct a [gallery walk](#) so that students can compare the way that they have summarised and visually represented the text

Finally, display Anna Bron's illustration. Deconstruct and annotate the image as a class by identifying and analysing:

- The salient image: the Sasquatch, which is the salient image due to its placement, in the centre of the image. This is an effective salient image because it is the first creature mentioned in the poem.
- The reading path: This is informed by the order the creatures are mentioned. The second creature, the abominable snowman appears directly above the Sasquatch, but then the creatures appear out of order, forcing the readers' eyes to leap all over the page. This adds to the enjoyment of the poem as you are required to spot the creatures as they appear in the poem.

To conclude the activity, students may wish to conduct a similar deconstruction of their own illustration, or their peers.