

Captain Ahab's Weird Wide World: Toktokkies

article by [Karen Wasson](#) | illustrated by [Shelley Knoll-Miller](#) | photos by Alamy

[EN2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E3LA09](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning how to use visual tools when I draw so that I can use illustrations to communicate with my audience effectively.

Success criteria:

- I can identify the way different illustrators have used framing, angles and other visual techniques to make the audience focus on aspects of their pictures
- I can identify ways to demonstrate action in illustrations
- I can create movement in illustrations
- I can use framing and angles to inform my audience effectively

After reading the text, ask students to recall different ways that Toktokkies move. These should include:

- Tapping on the ground with their abdomens, making a tok-tokkie kind of sound
- Running extremely fast, creating a breeze underneath them
- Climbing to the tops of dunes to do handstands

Inform students that they are going to be creating a new dance for the toktokkies and drawing a sequence of pictures to demonstrate it. Draw students' attention to the pictures accompanying the text, beginning with the photos. Ask them to describe the physical features of the toktokkies. Answers should include:

- They have long legs that stretch out to the side of their bodies
- They have a large rear that sticks up in the air
- They have small heads that are positioned closer to the ground

Next, have students look at the illustration that depicts the toktokkie dancing. Ask students what dance move it is performing and how the artist has demonstrated it (it is kicking its right legs out to the side, which is shown through the right legs being outstretched and up higher than the left legs).

Referring to the Australian Curriculum glossary entry for [framing](#), ask students what kind of framing the toktokkie in the illustration is (strong) and how they can tell (it creates a sense of enclosure as the toktokkie fills up most of the frame, as though it is zoomed in). Further, discuss the elements that students feel make it an engaging illustration. These may include the toktokkies facial expression, the fact that it appears as though the toktokkie is facing us and that its eyes are directing our focus to its dancing legs.

Have students turn to the poem *The Undeterred Octopus* on page 10. Discuss the elements this illustration shares with the one from the article about toktokkies. These should include the use of strong framing in this illustration, the happy facial expression and the fact that the character is facing the audience. Repeat this process with *Knight and Day* on page 20.

Explain to students that they should work with a partner or small group to come up with a dance for the toktokkies. Like the moves written about in the article, their dances may be a form of communication, a method for staying cool, a way of getting a drink, or any other reason they can think of that a toktokkie may dance!

Their dances should comprise of approximately 4-8 moves. Once they have worked out their sequence of moves, they should use a ruler to divide a piece of paper into even sections, which will create the frames for their pictures.

Remind students to use a strong frame and have their dancing toktokkie character 'facing' the reader. They should also consider the toktokkie's facial expression to engage the reader and may wish to incorporate the use of their character's eyeline to draw the viewer's focus to a particular body part for each move.

Top of the World

story by Simon Cooke | illustrated by [Sarah Davis](#)

[EN-2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E3LE02](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning to respond to and compose a range of texts that express other viewpoints of the world and use this to justify my own personal opinions and goals.

Success criteria:

- I can recognise the way a character can find the strength and willpower to tackle their own challenges by taking inspiration from someone else's accomplishments
- I can consider and discuss how this way of thinking can also apply to me
- I can research a person I find inspirational and write about the way this helps me focus on achieving my own goals

Essential knowledge:

Information about applying our own perspective to a text can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Perspective](#).

Prior to reading the story, watch the video [Sir Edmund Hillary](#) and have a brief discussion about the expedition to the summit of Mount Everest depicted in the video.

Read the text Top of the World. Ask students why they think Luca feels that riding to the top of Gum Tree Hill is his own version of climbing Mount Everest. Answers may include:

- It is extremely high and steep
- It will take a lot of effort, energy and willpower
- He doesn't know if he'll be able to achieve it
- It is a huge personal challenge

Ask students for textual evidence that shows that Luca uses Sir Edmund Hilary as inspiration and motivation to keep going in his challenge to conquer Gum Tree Hill. Answers should include:

- So here I am, at the bottom of the hill, like Sir Edmund Hillary at the bottom of Mount Everest.
- I think about Sir Edmund Hillary: how he climbed up Mount Everest; how the mountain just went up and up, but he kept on going. He's my hero. He loved to push himself to the limit, to test his endurance to the max. Just like me.
- 'Top of the world, top of the world ...' I say it over and over. It helps focus my mind.
- It's still a long way to the top, not in altitude but in attitude.
- It's tempting to give up and coast back down. But what if Sir Ed has stopped climbing Everest? What if he'd built a snowman instead?
- In my imagination, Sir Ed appears ahead of me. He beckons for me to follow. If he can do it, so can I.
- Sir Ed waits for me to reach him; then he says, 'Come on, Luca, let's see the top of the world!'
- I can see him ... hear him, but best of all I can feel his passion for conquering challenges. That passion's in me too, always driving me.
- I know one day I'll make it to the top of another mountain and stand in the same place that Sir Ed stood, back in 1953.

Discuss with students how we are often inspired by others in life. Ask students to [think, pair and share](#) about someone who has inspired them or somebody they look up to. Select a few students to share their answers with the class.

Inform students they are going to write about something that they have achieved or would like to achieve and how they can look to the accomplishments of others for motivation, just like Luca did when he made it to the top of Gum Tree Hill.

This may be something like taking inspiration from their favourite Olympic runner when they were competing in the school athletics carnival, or a social justice activist when they were preparing their class speech on an issue, they are passionate about.

Some suggestions of well-known inspirational figures may include Cathy Freeman, Jessica Watson, Dylan Alcott or Malala Yousafzai. If possible, allow students to explore the library's biography section (Dewey Decimal number 921) or make online resources available, such as [Little People, Big Dreams](#).

Once students have decided on the person, they take inspiration from, they should write a paragraph explaining who the person is, what accomplishments they are known for and how this inspires the student in their own goals. Students may then wish to publish their writing with an illustration and prepare it for display in the classroom.

The Undeterred Octopus

poem by [Rebecca Gardyn Levington](#) | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

EN2-UARL-01 | AC9E3LE04

Learning intentions:

I am learning to identify different techniques in composing poems that enhance the way they are read so that I can develop a better understanding of how to read and write poetry in a more connected and engaging way.

Success criteria:

- I can identify the way rhyme scheme and syllables affect the rhythm of a poem
- I can understand the purpose of using visual techniques in text, such as italics and capital letters to enhance the way words are read
- I can use my understanding of these techniques to influence the way that I read poetry aloud

Have students read the poem silently to themselves. After they have finished reading, draw their attention back to the title of the poem. Ask them what they think the word undeterred means now that they have read about the octopus' circumstances. Students should deduce that it refers to the octopus not being discouraged despite his difficulties in learning to roller-skate.

Discuss the structure of the poem, ensuring students understand that it includes three stanzas, each written in an ABCB rhyme scheme, with every two lines containing 13-14 syllables. Explain that these factors create a rhythm to the way we read the poem, which can influence how we experience or enjoy the text, in a similar way to music and songs.

Draw students' attention to the visual techniques used within the text to emphasise words and discuss how this may affect the way we say them when we read the poem out loud. These include:

- The words 'not' and 'know' being italicised would indicate that they should be accentuated when they are read aloud.
- The parentheses around the words whoa-WHOA tells us that this is an aside that deviates from the main poem and we may change our tone when saying it.

- The capitalisation of the second WHOA indicates that it is said louder than the first one. This gives the word a sense of panic and implies that the octopus came extremely close to falling over.
- The quotation marks around the last two lines of the poem tell the audience that this is a direct quote from the octopus, which would mean that they would be said in a different voice to the narrator. Given that the poem up until that point has informed readers that the octopus remains optimistic despite his setbacks, it's likely that he expresses this in an upbeat, positive tone.

Split the students into pairs or small groups and inform them that they are going to work together to create a recorded reading of the poem. This may be done with a device such as an iPad, laptop or phone. If technology is unavailable, they may instead prefer to rehearse and perform a live reading for the class of their interpretation of the poem.

Depending on the number of group members, students may wish to decide how they will split the vocal duties evenly. For example, if they are in a group of three, they may decide to read one full stanza each, every third line, or two lines at a time.

Remind students to focus on rhythm, tone and word emphasis and ensure they practice several times before recording so they feel comfortable with these elements in their reading.

Back in Time to 2023

play by [Rebecca M Newman](#) | illustrated by [Cheryl Orsini](#)

[EN2-OLC-01](#) | [AC9E3LY02](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning to consider factors that affect the way people speak so that I can understand the differences in vocal techniques such as pace, volume, tone and pitch.

Success criteria:

- I can use my own experience to discuss and experiment with changes in voice based on emotions and situations
- I can look for clues in a story that would influence the way someone speaks
- I can use my understanding of pace, volume, tone and pitch to perform the role of a character

Prior to reading the text, begin with a warm-up activity to prompt students into thinking about the different ways we use speech to convey emotion, such as pace, volume, tone and pitch. Explain this to the students using the following examples:

- Pace – When we are nervous, we often speak quicker than we normally would
- Volume – When we are feeling panicked, we often raise our voice
- Tone – When we are angry, we often speak with a harsher tone
- Pitch – When we are embarrassed, we often use a higher pitch in our voice

Write the words 'What is that?' on the board. Choose a student and ask them to read the words in a way that shows they are angry. Choose another student and ask them to read it in a way that demonstrates excitement, then another to read it in a way that shows curiosity. Ask students to come up with other emotions or scenarios that they can demonstrate by reading the phrase in different ways.

Following this activity, students read through the play independently to familiarise themselves with the text. Once they have had a chance to do this, divide them into groups and assign roles to students in a way that suits your class (there are 12 roles overall).

Give them time to become familiar with the dialogue and practice their roles. Remind them that they should consider how they use their voice to convey the feelings and situations of their characters. Advise them to look for clues to this in the brackets – some will give direct instruction (e.g., cheerfully, firmly, sadly, startled) and others will be more indirect and open to interpretation (e.g., sees a bee landing on Scholar C).

When groups have had enough time to read through and rehearse their lines together, create a space for the final performance/s – ideally a playground as this is the setting of the play. You may wish to have the class sit in a circle as each group reads out their performance, or students may prefer to act out the play with the other group/s as the audience.

The Test

story by Tom Brenna | illustrated by [Peter Cheong](#)

[EN2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E3LE01](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning to consider a point of view that is not depicted in a text so that I can build an understanding of the reasoning and motivations of different characters.

Success criteria:

- I can locate textual evidence to explain my observations about characters in a story
- I can consider how different characters may have made decisions based on their own beliefs and priorities
- I can apply my own beliefs and priorities to a scenario from the text and explains my choices

Essential knowledge:

Information about recognising and creating imagery can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Point of View](#).

After reading the story, have students reread the following excerpt and discuss its meaning:

‘The Sthenons still don’t trust us. They set great store in caring for animals. So, to test us out, they occasionally plant one of their pets on our ships.’

‘They set us up?’ Paul’s dad asked.

‘If the crew takes care of the pet, then the Sthenons still trade with us. If not...’

Discuss the meaning of this excerpt and how it relates to the title of the story. Ensure that students understand that ‘The Test’ refers to the Sthenons setting up Paul’s family for a test to decide whether or not they would do business with them. The test was to check if their pet would be treated well because kindness to animals is very

important to the Sthenons, and they passed the test because Paul was kind to the kirett and looked after him.

Ask students to find textual evidence of Paul's kindness towards the kirett. Answers may include:

- The kirett ate root vegetables, so Paul saved his food and asked for more.
- The kirett was getting bored, so Paul hid him in his jacket and took him for walks.
- He worried about the kirett when it was hiding because of all the dangers on the ship.

Explain that although the story is a third person narrative, the story explores the experience and point of view of Paul and his family. Discuss what the Sthenons point of view may have been when they were deciding on the test and how they may have come to make decisions to put it into action.

Ask students to think about the things that are important to them and what qualities they look for in others. Explain that this may include kindness, honesty, fairness or a sense of humour. Write a list of student answers on the board for them to refer to later in the lesson.

Write a scenario on the board, such as:

You are going to start your own small business and you need to find a business partner to work with. You decide to come up with a way to test people who want the position based on one quality that is extremely important to you.

Explain to students that their small business can be anything they decide, such as cupcake making or dog walking. The most important point is they need to decide on what the personal quality is that they are choosing and how they would test if someone has it. Ensure the students understand that the test should not be one that is unkind in any way to their potential business partner but is merely to give them an idea if they are well-matched in their qualities.

Students should write a sentence about their business, the personal quality they are choosing and why, as well as the way they would test the person. To model an example, choose a student to suggest a personal quality to the class, then discuss

how they might test if someone has it. Based on this discussion, write an example on the board such as:

I would like to start a business washing cars. I need to find a business partner who is reliable because people will be booking in their cars for us to wash and I won't be able to do them all on my own. To test the person's reliability, I would make a plan with them to meet on a Saturday morning and each deliver 50 advertising fliers. I would make sure that their delivery route includes my grandparents' house and my cousin's house. This way I can be sure that they are going to show up at the agreed time and I will be able to check that they reliably completed the job.

Students should write their own paragraph in their books.

Knight and Day

poem by [Melinda Szymanik](#) | illustrated by [Michael Streich](#)

[EN2-REFLU-01](#) | [AC9E3LY12](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning to identify the correct spelling and meanings of words that are homophones so that I can use them appropriately in my writing, but also to make my writing more fun and interesting.

Success criteria:

- I can identify the use of wordplay in a text that uses homophones
- I can think about homophones that I already know and recognise the different spelling and meanings of these words
- I can use homophones in a fun and logical

Prior to reading the text, discuss students' understanding of homophones. Ensure students understand that homophones are words that sound the same but have different spelling and different meanings. Read the text and ask students what they noticed about the way the author uses homophones. Students should identify that the title of the poem is a wordplay on the phrase 'night and day' and the words knight and night are used in the poem.

After reading the poem, have students ['think, pair and share'](#) to identify the topic of the poem. Explain that to do this they should consider who the poem is about and what situation they're in. Students should identify that the poem is about the things that a knight does at home at nighttime, therefore the topic of the poem is essentially 'the night of a knight'.

Have students read the poem again and discuss what they noticed about the way the author uses homophones. Answers may include:

- The title of the poem is a wordplay on the phrase 'night and day'
- The use of 'knight all day' in the first line and 'daily knight' in the last line is interesting because they are a play on the words day and night.

Watch the video [I Spy with my Eye – Homophones!](#) and write the homophone examples that it contains on the board. Ask students to add to the list by thinking of other homophones they know. Some examples may include:

- deer / dear

- fair / fare
- for / four
- cell / sell
- made / maid
- peace / piece
- meat / meet
- hole / whole
- buy / by
- right / write
- wait / weight

Inform students that they will be composing a short poem using homophones. To do this they should choose which homophones they would like to use and experiment with them (they may wish to experiment with a few until they find a pair that they can come up with an idea or rhyme for).

Model an example on the board, such as:

A seagull stole a piece of my fruit
While I was trying to eat in peace
But after that it just got worse
Because along came five hungry geese!

Mobs of Meerkats

article by [Sue Murray](#) | photos by Alamy

[EN2-OLC-01](#) | [AC9E3LY07](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning to summarise information that I read in a text and present it in a logical sequence so that I can communicate my knowledge effectively with others.

Success criteria:

- I can understand how to read information and identify the main points
- I can present acquired information in my own words
- I can work with a group to create a presentation based on what we learnt

Prior to reading the text, explain to the class that they will be working in groups to summarise information in one section of the article and present it to the class so everyone can learn different things from each other about meerkats. Inform students that to summarise something, they need to read it and understand what the main points are, then write those points in their own words. Explain that they will be writing a summary of their section in order and using pictures to go with their points.

Read through the first section in full (What is a meerkat?) as a class. Read through again, this time pausing after every 1-2 sentences to summarise the main points and write them on the board. You should end up with a summary similar to the following:

Summary:

- The word meerkat means 'lake cat' in the South African language Afrikaans even though it is not a cat and doesn't live in a lake.
- It is a small mammal from the mongoose family that lives in the desert.
- Meerkats balance on their tails when they stand upright.

- They use their long, curved claws on their front paws to dig for food and burrow into the ground and the claws on their back paws to climb trees and shrubs.
- Every meerkat has a different pattern of stripes. They also have thin fur and black skin on their bellies. This helps them stay warm because black absorbs the heat better.

Divide students into nine groups and assign one sub-headed section to each group for them to summarise. If available, provide a software application such as PowerPoint, Google Slides or Canva for Education for their presentations, and allow students to search for meerkat images online. Alternatively, they may wish to create a presentation on paper or in their books and create meerkat illustrations to accompany their points. Explain that they should have one slide or page per point at a relevant image to go with each.

John Stephen Pendlebury

poem by [Bill Condon](#) | illustrated by [Aska](#)

[EN2-CWT-01](#) | [AC9E3LE05](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning to understand, interpret and experiment with rhythm and composition of poetry so that I can create texts that include these features.

Success criteria:

- I can discuss the content of a poem, including aspects such as subject matter and structure
- I can use the format of a poem to explore and showcase my own ideas

Have students close their eyes as you read the poem out loud, or if you have a digital subscription, you can listen to the audio version. Ask students to picture what is happening in the poem as they are listening.

Discuss how John Stephen Pendlebury uses his imagination to take him to places near (the corner shop) and far (the Milky Way) and how we can all use our imagination to take ourselves to places that we find interesting and exciting. Have students talk to a partner about the kind of places they would love to go and how they can use their imaginations to get there.

Students should then compose a poem about themselves taking an imaginary journey as they drift off to sleep. Model an example on the board, such as:

When Charlotte Mia Leighton at night goes to bed
She dreams of all the places she can go in her head
She can zoom through the ocean in her blue submarine
And follow the trails of whales that show where they've been

She can talk to the dolphins and glide with the sharks
She can play with the sea lions and mimic their barks
But she's shaken awake just as she touches the sand
And has to return to her life back on dry land

Point out that both the example poem and the text in the magazine contain rhyming couplets (AA BB) and they should aim for the same rhyme scheme in their poems.

Students should start by brainstorming where they would like to go in their poem and then writing keywords based on what they would see and do at the place in their imagination. From there they can look for opportunities for rhyming words and build their couplets.

Remind students that their name should be included in the first line of the poem!

If time allows, students should publish their poems with an illustration which may be displayed in the classroom.

Ice Monsters and Aliens

story by [Alys Jackson](#) | illustrated by [Jenny Tan](#)

[EN-2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E3LE03](#)

Learning intentions:

I am learning to discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts and explore how the settings shape the events and influence mood in my writing.

Success criteria:

- I can identify the descriptive words and phrases used to create a sense of place in a text
- I can imagine how I would feel in a setting, using my senses
- I can create an imaginary place of my own and use descriptive words and phrases that would help the audience imagine themselves there

After reading the story, ask students to locate words and phrases in the text that help describe the planet the characters are on for the reader. Answers should include:

- Triple moons at sunset
- Moons rising behind the mountains, huge and tinged with pale violet stripes
- Rocky and slippery
- Frozen water that smells fresh
- Ice flowers in a valley
- Ice fields
- Ice fountain

Discuss how they come together to give the reader an understanding of the setting and ask students to use their senses to imagine how they would experience their surroundings in that setting. Answers may include:

- It would smell cool and fresh
- Things would look very white and pale blue because of all the ice
- We would feel cold and would have to wear warm clothes
- We would have to walk carefully in the rocky and slippery areas

Inform students that they will be creating their own setting or world and using descriptive words and phrases that help readers imagine how they would feel if they were there. To do this they may wish to first sketch some ideas of what their world may look like, then use their senses to think about how they would experience the setting. They should then write a list of descriptive words and phrases to help them create their setting.

Take suggestions from students of an imaginary world, then work with students to model an example on the board. For example, if they suggest a desert-like setting, they may come up with words and phrases, such as:

Descriptive words and phrases:

- Warm winds
- Rough sand
- Water is hard to find
- Sweltering heat

Students should then begin brainstorming in their books by creating sketches and/or writing their ideas. Once they feel they have shaped their idea for an imaginary place, students should draw a picture of their setting on a piece of paper and write their descriptive words and phrases within or around the illustration, ensuring that they have depicted these descriptions in their picture as best as possible.

