

# A Fright in the Bight

part one of a story by [Geoffrey McSkimming](#) | illustrated by [Douglas Holgate](#)

EN2-UARL-01 | AC9E3LE03

## Learning intention:

I am learning to explore how settings shape the events and influence the mood of a narrative so that I can experiment with creating my own setting to match the mood of a story.

## Success criteria:

- I can discuss the connection between the setting and the mood in a story.
- I can identify the types of stories that might occur in particular settings.
- I can make predictions about what will happen in part two of the story.
- I can sketch a setting to match the mood of the story based on my prediction.

Read the beginning of the story (up to the end of page 4). Discuss extracts that describe the setting. Sample responses include:

There was a good, steady ocean swell this evening...

The sail was up and it was billowing round and full with the sweet, cool breeze that was helping to guide them on their course.

Identify how the character Ahab is feeling, evident through the following description:

And so Ahab was able to relax a little.

Discuss how the descriptions of both the setting and the way the character is feeling match each other in terms of mood. Discuss the overall mood for this section of the story, ensuring students note that the mood at this point is calm, peaceful and without complication.

Instruct students to use lines to separate a page in their workbooks into four rectangles. Tell students to label the first rectangle 'beginning'. Instruct them to sketch what they think the setting they have just analysed might look like. Tell students to add any key words about the feelings evoked by the setting alongside their sketch. Those with a digital subscription may like to play the audio file of the story to assist students when creating their sketch.

Continue reading up to the end of page 7. Identify descriptions of the setting and the character's feelings, ensuring students note extracts such as:

"The splaying lights," Bob read quietly to himself, "reach silently down from the unidentified objects, which eyewitnesses claim look like gigantic silver phones hovering about silently in the skies..." (page 6)

Bob looked out into the ever-darkening evening. He smelt the salt on the breeze and felt the cool air ruffling through his fur. Above, the skies were growing darker as the sun was slowly slipping below the horizon. (page 6)

Everything looked calm and shipshape and peaceful, but Bob couldn't help feeling a small surge of fear rising up from his tail and creeping into his whiskers. (page 7)

'Oh, this here be a very lonely stretch of the sea,' he observed. (page 7)

Discuss how the setting (the ever-darkening evening and the lonely stretch of sea) is reflecting the eerie mood of the book Bob is reading. Note how the mood is beginning to change from the opening of the story and that it is becoming more scary and eerie. Instruct students to use the second rectangle in their workbooks to sketch or to note key words about this setting.

Instruct students to work with a partner and read to the end of the story. Tell them to identify extracts that describe the setting and the overall mood of the story before sketching their ideas and making notes in the third rectangle on their page. Students should identify the following extracts:

Shasta stood and she and Bob looked out portside. It was quite dark now, and difficult to see much because of the shimmering haze that often comes off the water just before nightfall has fully arrived. But there, in the far distance, the broлга and otter could just make out a dim line stretching across the water. (page 9)

'We're coming into the Great Australian Bight,' announced Ahab. 'Ahead of us lies—' (page 9)

Bob saw what had caused her explosive outburst. There, high in the skies, above the dark ribbon of the coastline, a medley of bright orange, green, red and purple beams of lights was splaying all across the land.

'Aliens!' blurted Bob, his fur going instantly clammy. 'We be sailing into uncharted terror-tory!'

Discuss students' responses noting how the dark sky adds to the fearful mood when the characters see the lights they assume belong to aliens. Tell students that they will be coming back to the story, A Fright in the Bight, a little later in the lesson.

Inform students that they will be applying this knowledge to a variety of settings to experiment with story ideas where the character's feelings and the setting work together to create the mood.

Display the following list of settings:

- a cosy living room with a glowing fire
- a deserted forest at night
- a sunny beach during the day

- a run-down town on the edge of a canal at night

Discuss ideas for stories that might occur in each of these settings. For example, a warm, feel-good story about a child listening to a bedtime story in the cosy living room or a scary story about a lost child in the deserted forest.

Instruct students to add their own ideas of settings to the list. Tell them to include the time of day and the season for each location. Tell students to select one or two of the settings from the list and discuss the type of story that might occur there with their partner.

Tell students that they will be referring back to A Fright in the Bight to experiment with creating their own setting for the next part of the story. Remind students that the story they have read is only part one of the narrative and that the second part will be appearing in the next issue of Countdown.

Discuss predictions of what might happen in part two of the story. Suggest ideas such as, the splaying lights of the aliens may reach down and lift the SS Webweaver up into the sky, or the crew may realise the lights are from a big party which they are invited to join.

Discuss settings that would match each of the moods of these predictions. For example: a thunderstorm breaks out in the sky as the SS Webweaver is lifted up, or the sky is flooded with light, the air is filled with delicious smells of food and uplifting music plays in the background as the crew arrive at the party.

Instruct students to discuss with their partner their own predictions about what will happen next in the story. Once they have decided on their ideas, tell students to discuss potential settings that reflect the mood of their predictions. Instruct students to collaboratively decide on one idea before sketching the setting or settings in the final rectangle in their workbooks. Tell students to note the key ideas of their predictions alongside their sketch.

## Unsinkable Sam

article by Mina | illustrated by Fifi Colston

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

### Learning intention:

I am learning to examine how images construct a relationship with the viewer through strategies such as the positioning of characters within a frame and the character's eyeline/gaze so that I can create my own image, experimenting with framing and gaze.

### Success criteria:

- I can examine the impact of placing objects in particular positions within a frame.
- I can analyse images to consider the impact of character's gaze.
- I can compose an image, experimenting with the placement of objects and the use of gaze to create a specific relationship between the character and the audience.

### Essential knowledge:

Ensure students are clear about what is meant by the term **framing**. Inform students that the term 'gaze' in the context of this lesson means the direction in which the characters are looking within an illustration.

Inform students that when illustrators and photographers compose images they make deliberate choices about where to place objects within a frame.

### Learning resource:

Begin the lesson by examining the impact the placement of objects within a frame has on viewers. Do this by sketching a rectangular frame on the board. Draw a background, such as hills and sky. Add a stick person to the sketch, initially placing the figure at the front and centre of the frame. Discuss whether students feel the person is a focal point of the image. Most likely they will conclude that they are. Then, rub out the stick person and place them at the back, making them much smaller this time. Discuss the different impression the new position of the stick person has on viewers. Most likely students will conclude that the person is less important or meaningful within the context of this new image.

Next, sketch an oval on the board to represent a face. Include eyes, drawing eyeballs and pupils. Place the pupils in the centre of the eyes to show the person gazing directly at the audience. Discuss the impression showing the eyes in this way has on viewers. Most likely students will conclude this makes the audience feel as though the person in the image is staring directly at them. Discuss inferences about what this says about the character, guiding students to concluding that showing a gaze front-on can imply the character is feeling calm and at ease or possibly confident and confrontational. Rub out these eyes and re-draw them, this time with the pupils pointing to the bottom right of the eyeball. Discuss the impression this has on viewers. Guide students towards concluding that the viewer follows the character's eyeline (their gaze) to see what they are looking at. Discuss the inferences viewers may make from this, for example that the character is avoiding looking directly at the audience, either because they have something to hide or as there is something more interesting to look at within the image. Inform students this is one way in which illustrators are able to direct where viewers look within an image.

Those with a digital subscription can complete the interactive activity now to examine how framing an object impacts the experience of viewers.

Inform students that they will be using the knowledge they have acquired around framing and gaze to analyse the images that accompany the article *Unsinkable Sam*.

Refer students to the first illustration and discuss the following:

- What direction is the cat (Oscar) looking? (off to the left)
- What can you infer based on the direction the cat is looking in? (he looks sheepish, like he is feeling too guilty to look directly at the audience)

- Where is the cat placed within the picture? (in the front-centre, slightly off to the right)
- What else is visible in the image? (the ship deck and an explosion at the side of the ship)
- What impact does the placement of the elements have on viewers? (it allows viewers to see the focal point, Oscar, with much of the background still visible)

Refer to the speech bubbles included within the illustrations and discuss what they add to each image. Sample responses include, they provide the mouse's point of view, they add humor to the illustrations.

Place students in pairs and instruct them to discuss the same questions as earlier in relation to the remaining two illustrations.

Inform students that they will be experimenting with composing their own illustration, using framing and character's gaze to direct the viewer's attention.

Emphasise that one of the ships Oscar worked on, HMS Cossack, is mentioned in the article but has not had an illustration dedicated to it. Discuss details revealed in the article about HMS Cossack, such as it was attacked and sunk.

Discuss an illustration that could communicate these facts. Emphasise that there aren't too many details included in the article about this event. Tell students that because of this they can make up additional information when composing their illustrations. Discuss ideas and provide an example such as: as the ship sunk, Oscar may have jumped into a life-raft and a mouse might have jumped in after him.

Provide students with art materials such as coloured pencils and paper. Alternatively, students with access to digital software might prefer to use programs such as Microsoft Paint.

Instruct students to compose an image to illustrate their idea about how Oscar escaped the HMS Cossack. Remind students that the illustrations in the magazine include speech bubbles. Discuss speech bubbles that might be included. Provide an example such as, the mouse shouting 'wait for me' as it jumps in the life-raft after Oscar. Instruct students to strive to include speech bubbles in their own images.

## An Adventure for Charlie

story by Bev Wood | illustrated by [Cheryl Orsini](#)

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

### Learning intention:

I am learning to identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view so that I can experiment with creating a role-play examining an alternative point of view.

**Success criteria:**

- I can identify the point of view a story is told from.
- I can consider alternative points of view when events from the story are adapted.
- I can experiment with a role-play examining alternative points of view.

**Essential knowledge:**

View the video on [Point of View](#) from The School Magazine. Discuss with students the information in the video, ensuring they note that point of view means the perspective a story is told from.

**Learning resource:**

Read *An Adventure for Charlie*. Discuss whose point of view the story is told from (Charlie's). Discuss the reaction of the crew and the captain when they discover the stowaway. Ensure students note that they treat Charlie kindly, finding a cabin for him and providing him with food. Reflect on why they might have treated him kindly, concluding that it was most likely due to the fact he is an animal and therefore isn't seen as being responsible for his actions.

View the article [Stowaway found in South Africa plane wheel at Amsterdam](#) airport about a human stowaway.

Trigger warning: the third paragraph mentions that most stowaways do not survive so consideration should be taken when viewing this article with students who may be sensitive to such material.

Inform students that they will be experimenting with point of view by composing a story where the stowaway is human to reflect on the impact this has on the crew and captain's reactions. Tell them that they will be role-playing the reactions of the captain and the stowaway.

Discuss the following:

- how might the captain and the crew react if they were to discover a human stowaway? (e.g. the captain may be angry with the stowaway, the stowaway would be in trouble)
- how might a human stowaway be treated differently once detected, to the way Charlie was treated? (e.g. it is likely a human stowaway would be arrested rather than offered a comfy cabin)

Discuss how the stowaway might feel. Refer back to the story to identify extracts that reveal how Charlie felt when he was first detected on board. For example,

Poor Charlie began to shake with fright.

Students will most likely conclude that the stowaway might be stressed and nervous and that they might have stowed away out of desperation.

Select a student to experiment with the teacher, improvising a role-play of an interaction between a human stowaway and a captain on board a ship. A sample role-play has been provided below.

Captain: Well, well, what do we have here? (spoken in a loud, booming voice)

Stowaway: I, I, I, I'm sorry, I'm just heading to my room... (spoken in a scared, quivering voice)

Captain: Wait right there. Are you a stowaway?

Stowaway: Maybe, yes. I didn't mean to cause any harm. I'm just trying to visit my family.

Captain: Well that may be, but you've broken the law.

Stowaway: Please, don't report me.

Captain: I'm afraid I have to. Come with me. I need to call the police.

Place students in pairs and instruct them to role-play their own interaction between a ship's captain and a stowaway. Remind them to consider each person's point of view. Allow time for students to take a turn experimenting with each of the roles. Once students have had time to rehearse, match them with another pair and instruct them to perform their role-plays to each other.

# Captain Ahab's Weird Wide World: Caterpillar Soup: How to Make a Butterfly

article by Karen Wasson | photos by Alamy

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

## **Learning intention:**

I am learning to plan and deliver short presentations, providing some key details in a logical sequence so that I can learn to share my ideas.

## **Success criteria:**

- I can reflect on how challenging misconceptions and providing surprising information engages readers.
- I can research surprising facts about an animal.
- I can include information gathered through research in a presentation on my chosen animal.

Read Captain Ahab's *Weird Wide World: Caterpillar Soup: How to Make a Butterfly*. Identify the text type (informative) and discuss how students can be sure the information included is factual (they can use other sources to check the facts).

Discuss information included in the story that students found surprising. Jot these ideas on the board. Suggested answers include:

- Most butterflies don't actually make cocoons.
- The juices from inside the caterpillar's stomach begin to digest the caterpillar once it's inside the chrysalis.
- The juices turn the caterpillar into a kind of soup.
- When a butterfly first hatches from the chrysalis it is unable to fly as its wings are too wet.

Discuss the impact on readers of including surprising information/little-known facts. Most likely students will conclude that this increases readers' enjoyment of texts and that it engages readers in the article.

Inform students that they will be researching surprising facts about other animals to include in their own informative presentation.

Inform students that they will need to decide on the elements to include in their presentation. Refer back to the article *Captain Ahab's Weird Wide World: Caterpillar Soup: How to Make a Butterfly*. Discuss the types of information included in the introduction and under each subheading. Ensure students conclude the following:

- Introduction: introduces the topic of how a caterpillar turns into a butterfly.
- Excuse me while I change: challenges common misconceptions about cocoons and chrysalises.
- Caterpillar soup: outlines what the caterpillar does once they are inside the chrysalis.
- Let me out of here: describes how the butterfly exits the chrysalis and what it does once it exits.

Discuss how this structure might be transferred to a different topic. Ensure students conclude that their informative presentation should include the following:

- an introduction informing the audience of the topic



- a section challenging common misconceptions about the animal
- factual information specific to their chosen animal

Inform students that for now they will be working on the first two elements only, the introduction and a section challenging misconceptions or outlining the creature's special feature.

Provide students with access to the following webpages, either digitally or printed.

- [25 Amazing Animal Facts to Share With Your Students](#)
- [26 Amazing Animal Facts for Kids](#)
- Students can also select one of the animals from the National Geographic Kids section [Animals](#)

View the first article with the students. Select one of the facts from the article, for example:

The regal horned lizard has a gross way of repelling attackers. They squirt blood out of their eyes!

Collaboratively compose an introductory paragraph and a section challenging a common misconception or outlining a special feature about the regal horned lizard. A sample response is provided below:

The regal horned lizard is one special reptile. It has an unusual feature which it uses to keep itself safe in even the most threatening of situations.

Most people think of lizards as small defenseless creatures that are left scrambling for safety whenever a predator approaches. The regal horned lizard has a surprising way of scaring off creatures that may try to attack it. Instead of hiding under a rock, it shoots blood... out of its eye. Yep, you heard that right. This tiny reptile can shoot blood from their eyes.

With the class use a program such as PowerPoint to create a brief presentation featuring the two paragraphs composed collaboratively. Add visual elements such as photos or videos.

- For more information on the [Regal Horned Lizard](#) view the National Geographic page.

Place students in small groups. Instruct them to select a special fact about an animal from the articles above. Tell them that they will be using the special fact as the basis for their presentations. Tell students to compose two paragraphs, an introductory paragraph on what they already know about the animal and a section challenging a common misconception or outlining the special feature they have discovered through research. Remind students that they are not expected to undertake extensive research, merely they are required to include the special fact with their own ideas to form a simple presentation. Instruct students to create a presentation using PowerPoint to exhibit the paragraphs they construct. Tell

students they'll need to add visual elements and that they can use internet search engines to obtain images.

Allow time for students to work on their presentations before instructing them to take turns sharing their presentations with another group.

# Mia's Mystery Birthday Party

story by [Marian McGuinness](#) | illustrated by Queenie Chan

[EN2-RECOM-01](#) | [AC9E3LY05](#)

## Learning intention:

I am learning to use comprehension strategies to make predictions about the meanings of subject-specific vocabulary by building on literal and inferred meanings so that I can identify the meanings of unfamiliar words when I read.

## Success criteria

- I can identify unfamiliar vocabulary in a story.
- I can use context to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- I can compose a sentence that allows readers to infer the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Read Mia's Mystery Birthday Party through once without pausing to discuss elements of the story. Those with a digital subscription may prefer to listen to the audio file of the story.

Read Mia's Mystery Birthday Party for the second time, this time pausing to identify vocabulary unfamiliar to some students. Avoid revealing the meanings of each of the words just yet. Instead, inform students that they will be making their own predictions about the meanings. List the vocabulary students identify on the board. Ideas of unfamiliar vocabulary includes:

- pneumonia
- drawbridge
- antenna
- jousting
- jackhammer
- fortune teller

- trapeze
- piñata
- jacaranda
- windup

Discuss strategies students commonly use when they encounter unfamiliar words such as, looking the words up in a dictionary, asking a friend, using the context to assist them with identifying the meaning.

Inform students that they will be using the context to assist them with predicting the meanings of each of the words they have identified.

Discuss the first word on the list (pneumonia). Inform any students who already know what the word 'pneumonia' means to keep it to themselves for now to allow the rest of the students to work through strategies for identifying the meaning. Instead, they should write the meaning on a piece of scrap paper to support them with resisting the urge of sharing it at this time. Refer back to the story and identify the sentence 'pneumonia' appears in.

'It's a bit too cold to walk the plank,' said Dad. 'We don't want your friends getting pneumonia!'

Use the [think-aloud](#) strategy to reflect on how the word has been used in the sentence, emphasising how familiar vocabulary used in the sentence can provide clues:

For example,

- 'cold' implies that pneumonia is related to being cold. Discuss what else happens in the cold, ensuring students conclude that being unwell is often related to being cold
- 'don't want' which implies pneumonia is something to be avoided
- 'getting' which implies pneumonia is something you don't already have but that you can acquire or catch

Discuss predictions about what 'pneumonia' might mean based on students' inferences. Steer students towards concluding that pneumonia is a type of illness. Allow any students who wrote down their ideas about what the word might mean to share what they wrote.

Place students in pairs and allocate them each some of the words from the list on the board. Instruct students to use the same strategy, analysing the context and the other vocabulary in the sentence to infer the meaning of each of their allocated words.

Once students have had time to work through some of the words, discuss students responses. Encourage students to share the clues that allowed them to make their predictions.

Inform students that they will be composing their own sentences, experimenting with using context to allow readers to make predictions about the meanings of unknown words.

Refer back to Mia's Mystery Birthday Party and discuss how often using the conjunction 'and' to connect an idea with the unknown word allows readers to make inferences. For example,

We could dig a moat around our house and build a drawbridge and fly a flag from the TV antenna. (Highlight that here the use of 'and' implies a 'drawbridge' is related to a 'moat' and a 'flag', which are both related to castles. Emphasise that this guides readers to inferring a drawbridge also relates to a castle.)

Identify further examples where the other words included in the sentence have allowed readers to infer the meaning of the unknown word. For example:

We'd have to jackhammer the driveway to dig the moat (highlighting that the word 'dig' allows readers to infer that a jackhammer has something to do with digging)

'How about a circus party with Zoltar the Fortune Teller and a fairy floss machine! We could build a flying trapeze and a tightrope... (emphasising that vocabulary such as 'circus', 'build', and 'flying' allow readers to infer a trapeze is used in a circus and that it has something to do with flying)

Provide students with dictionaries. Collaboratively select a word students may be unfamiliar with. Alternatively, select a word from the article [Unfamiliar Words](#). For example 'accord'. Identify the meaning (concurrence of opinion) and ensure students are aware that this means agreeing on something.

Discuss how a sentence might be constructed that would allow readers to infer the meaning of the word. Experiment with ideas, using strategies used in Mia's Mystery Birthday Party (using words familiar to students to provide clues and using the word 'and' to connect two related ideas). Sample responses have been provided below:

- We could ask those who concur with the main idea to stand on the right-hand side of the room.
- In a discussion it is important to show you concur and that you are happy to go along with the plan.

Instruct students to work with their partner to identify a word unfamiliar to them from the dictionary or from the article [Unfamiliar Words](#). Tell students to compose a sentence that allows readers to infer the meaning of the word without stating it specifically.

Once students have had time to compose their sentences, match them with another pair. Instruct students to read each other's sentences and to use comprehension strategies to infer the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Share responses, commenting on the strategies students used to allow them to predict the meanings of the words.

## The Abominable Toeman

poem by [Bill Condon](#) | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

**Learning intention:**

I am learning to experiment with creating texts that adapt patterns encountered in literary texts, for example rhyme and subject matter so that I can develop my skills with composing poetry.

**Success criteria:**

- I can identify ideas in a poem surrounding fears.
- I can compose lines for a poem about a fear.
- I can edit my work to ensure my lines rhyme.
- I can include a joke in my poem.

Discuss what the narrator of the poem is scared of (monsters under the bed). Discuss how the narrator deals with their fear, highlighting lines such as:

I sometimes also keep my toes enclosed in football socks.

You can't go wrong with ones that pong-they ward off monster shocks.

Inform students that they will be constructing a poem about something they are scared of now or something they used to fear.

Discuss things students are scared of. Suggest ideas such as, the dark, large dogs, spiders. Students may feel more comfortable sharing something they used to be scared of when they were younger. Collaboratively select an example from the fears students identify (e.g. the dark). Discuss ideas around what makes the dark scary. Sample responses include:

- hearing strange noises
- not knowing what's out there
- being alone

Discuss what support could be implemented to make this fear less scary. Provide examples such as, using a nightlight, keeping a torch at hand, sleeping in their sibling's bedroom at night.

Collaboratively construct a few lines for a poem about what makes the dark scary and how someone might overcome this fear. Tell students not to worry about the structure for now. Instead they should focus on getting their ideas on what makes their fear so scary down on the page. A sample response has been provided.

At nighttime I worry about strange noises.

And my ideas drift to scary thoughts.

I wish I knew what was out there,  
So I wouldn't stare out in the dark.  
I use a torch so I don't feel scared.  
I need to save my money for batteries.

Refer back to The Abominable Toeman and discuss the rhyming structure. Ensure students note that the poem features rhyming couplets.

Collaboratively edit the poem to ensure you include rhyming couplets. Model reordering some of the words or changing vocabulary for synonyms to identify rhyming words. Use a rhyming dictionary such as [RhymeZone](#) to identify words that rhyme. A sample edit has been provided:

At nighttime strange noises make me worry,  
And my ideas drift to scary thoughts in a hurry.  
I wish I knew what was out there,  
So in the dark I wouldn't stare.  
I use a torch to make me brave.  
If I need batteries I have to save.

Pause before the ending the poem and refer back to The Abominable Toeman. Discuss the way the poem ends (with a joke about a missing toe). Discuss jokes that could be added to the poem composed collaboratively, providing examples such as the torch is actually an alien or the sibling is a monster. Add a further couplet to the poem that features a joke. For example,

I search for my torch and realise it's not there,  
Instead it's coiled up in a monster's hair.

Instruct students to experiment with composing their own poem about a fear they have or one they have had in the past and a strategy they could use to overcome their fear. Remind students to strive to include rhyming couplets and to aim to end their poem with a joke. Students may work in small groups, in pairs or independently for this task.

## Frog School

play by [Philippa Werry](#) | illustrated by Amy Golbach

[EN2-OLC-01](#) | [AC9E3LA01](#)

**Learning intention:**

I am learning that successful cooperation with others in pair and group work depends on roles and collaborative patterns, for example, asking relevant questions, providing useful feedback and prompting and checking individual and group understanding, so that I can develop my ability of contributing to group work.

**Success criteria:**

- I can identify elements that enable successful cooperation when teaching a new skill.
- I can collaborate with a peer/peers when deciding on a topic to teach.
- I can successfully teach a new skill to a peer/peers by following collaborative patterns such as, providing useful feedback and prompting and checking individual and group understanding.
- I can cooperate with others to learn a new skill by using strategies such as asking relevant questions.

Read Frog School. Discuss what Professor Freshwater is planning to do (teach the frogs a lot of froggy tricks). Discuss what the other frogs decide when Professor Freshwater appears to have been eaten by a snake (they decide to teach the skills they already possess to each other).

Teach the students how to construct a paper aeroplane following the steps on [Dart Paper Airplane](#). As you work through the steps, discuss elements the teacher can do that support students with learning the skill. For example:

- breaking the skills down into small achievable steps
- checking students' understanding as you teach
- inviting clarifying questions from students and responding the questions
- recapping on key ideas

Display the list for students to refer to.

Inform students that they will be preparing a skill to teach to their peers using the elements identified above to successfully communicate their ideas.

Place students in pairs. Instruct them to think of a skill they might like to teach their peers. Alternatively, they might like to select an origami activity from [Very Simple Origami For Kids and Easy Instructions](#). Some students may prefer using an activity from a previous issue of Countdown, such as How to Draw Birds from Issue 1, or explaining the recipe for Coconut Macaroons, from Issue 4, both from 2022.

Allow time for students to prepare how they will teach their skill. Match pairs together.

Teacher note: ensure when matching pairs together that you avoid matching two pairs who have both prepared teaching the same skill.

Instruct students to take turns teaching their skill to the other pair. Remind students to refer to the ideas listed on the board to ensure successful communication of the necessary steps required when learning the skill. Tell the students whose turn it is to be taught the skill to ask clarifying questions when the other group is teaching.

Rotate around the room, ensuring students are using successful cooperation strategies and offering advice where required. Once both pairs have had the opportunity to teach each other a skill, discuss how the strategies identified earlier supported the process. Encourage students to reflect on which cooperative skills they may need further work on mastering.

## A Perfect Country Night

poem by Lisa Varchol Perron | illustrated by Gabriel Evans

[EN2-VOCAB-01](#) | [AC9E3LA07](#)

### Learning intention:

I am learning to explore doing and saying verbs and to experiment with using them in my own writing so that I can become familiar with using them when I write.

### Success criteria:

- I can identify verbs in a poem.
- I can distinguish between doing and saying verbs.
- I can compose a poem about my perfect day.
- I can edit the verbs to make them more specific.
- I can use a mixture of doing and saying verbs.

### Essential knowledge

Ensure students know **verbs** are words used to show an action, occurrence or a state of being.

Check students understanding of **tense**. Ensure students are aware that the tense reveals when the action of the verb occurred, either in the past, present or future.

### Learning resource:

Read A Perfect Country Night. Collaboratively identify the verbs in the first stanza ('is', 'stitched', 'huddle', 'wrap'). List these on the board. Discuss the tense these are written in (most are written in the present tense apart from 'stitched' which is written in the past tense).

Place students with a partner and instruct them to identify further examples of verbs used in the poem. Sample responses include:



- swirls
- toasting
- lick
- sip
- spins
- to be
- lifts
- say
- ending

Add the verbs students identify to the list on the board.

Ensure students know the difference between doing verbs ('is', 'stitched', 'huddle', 'wrap', 'swirls', 'toasting') and saying verbs ('spins' when used in the line, 'and Grandpa spins his stories' and 'say'). Sort the verbs used in A Perfect Country Night into those that are doing verbs and those that are saying verbs.

Inform students that they will be using the skills they have learnt to compose their own poem about their ideas of a perfect day.

Discuss students' thoughts on what makes a perfect day. This can be tailored to suit the local area surrounding the school, for example, 'The perfect day at the beach' or 'The perfect day in the city'. Select one example, such as 'The perfect day at the beach' and discuss elements that make the day so special. Suggested ideas include:

- warm sunshine
- playing with friends
- swimming
- ice-cream

Collaboratively compose a poem featuring these ideas. Initially don't worry too much about including specific verbs. Strive to include descriptions of what is done and what is said on this perfect day. A sample response is:

Being in warm sunshine,  
Talking with friends,  
Swimming in icy water,  
Eating ice cream.

Refer students back to A Perfect Country Night and emphasise that the verbs are specific, and that the poem includes a mixture of both doing and saying verbs. Draw students'

attention to examples such as 'swirls', 'toasting', 'sip', 'spins' and 'say' from A Perfect Country Night. Inform students that they will now be editing the poem, to make the verbs more specific and to include a mixture of doing and saying verbs. Discuss suggestions for each of the verbs and edit where appropriate. For example, change 'being' to 'frolicking' and 'talking' with 'joking'.

Frolicking in warm sunshine,

Joking round with friends,

Swimming in icy water,

Ice-cream and make pretend.

Reread the poem with the improved verbs.

Inform students that they will now be constructing their own poems. Inform students that it is up to them whether their poems rhyme or not. Instead, the focus is on using specific verbs and on using a mixture of doing and saying verbs. Allow time for students to construct their poems, before creating small groups for students to share their poems with their peers.

## Help!

story by [Katie Furze](#) | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

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

### Learning intention:

I am learning to innovate on texts read, viewed and listened to by creating a sequel so that I can develop my skills of composing fiction texts.

### Success criteria:

- I can discuss a character's interpretations of what they encounter in the Australian desert.
- I can make inferences based on the actions of a character.
- I can imagine I am viewing my classroom through the eyes of the character Mo.
- I can compose narration in character for a sequel to the story.

Read Help! Those with a digital subscription can also listen to the audio file while examining the illustrations that accompany the story. Discuss the character Mo and ensure students are aware that he comes from a different planet.

Discuss some of the unique ways Mo tries to interact with each of the elements he encounters as he explores the Australian desert, for example:

- Trying the talk with the trees and boulders, evident in extracts such as:

He couldn't see anyone, only a clump of spiky trees. Friendly trees, he hoped.  
'Excuse me,' he asked them. 'Where am I?'

'Hello,' he said to a nearby boulder. 'I'm Mo.'

- Trying to talk to the snake and the bird.
- Calling 'help' up to the sky and noting that no one answered.
- Being surprised that animals are nocturnal, evident in extracts such as:

At night this place is full of life, Mo realised. How strange.

Discuss what can be inferred about where Mo comes from, based on his actions. Remind students that Mo talks to inanimate objects and animals in the story Help! which allows readers to infer that where Mo comes from both inanimate objects and animals talk and that as he was surprised by the amount of activity at night it is unlikely the animals from Mo's planet are nocturnal.

Draw students' attention to the fact that the animals marked out the letters 'SOS' in the story, Help! Discuss what can be inferred from this, ensuring students conclude that the animals did understand that Mo needed help.

Inform students that they will be imagining that Mo is visiting their classroom for the first time to compose a sequel to Help! Tell students to imagine that Mo has paid Earth another visit to find out more about humans and how they live.

Inform students that they will be composing a broadcast from Mo for him to send back to his home planet to share what he has learnt about them through their classroom.

Inform students that they will be using what they have inferred about where Mo comes from to help them construct the narration from Mo's point of view.

Discuss elements that are familiar to students but that Mo find interesting/unusual. Suggest ideas such as:

- completing work at a table
- reading books
- using a pencil to write with

Jot the ideas on the board. Invite students to add their own thoughts to the list.

Remind students of what they inferred about where Mo comes from, the fact he usually speaks to inanimate objects and animals. Discuss what Mo may try to speak to in the classroom. Provide examples such as, the whiteboard, a pen or a class pet.

Collaboratively compose a script featuring narration from Mo, that might be recorded for him to transmit back to his home planet as an audio file. For example:

This is such a strange place. The room is filled with unusual objects that stand on legs. On the shelves are huge rectangles that are hard on the outside but soft in the middle. The soft parts have been written all over with words. So disrespectful! Everything here is incredibly rude. I tried talking to this huge white rectangle and a feathered brown blob but they both ignored me. I sat on the floor and sobbed. I just cannot wait to come home.

Place students in pairs or small groups. Students can also work independently for this task. Instruct them to construct their own script for a broadcast for Mo to transmit home about visiting their classroom for the first time.

Allow time for students to discuss their ideas and to make brief notes. Once they have decided on ideas, instruct them to record their broadcast using voice recording software such as Voice Memos for IOS or [Rev Voice Recorder](#) for android. Students can add sound effects to their recordings using audio search engines such as [FindSounds](#).