

# The Meridian of Wonkiness

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

[EN2-SPELL-01](#) | [AC9E4LY09](#)

## Learning Intention:

I am learning to utilise a range of spelling strategies so that I can attempt to spell more complex words.

## Success Criteria:

- I can locate and list a range of complex words in a text.
- I can recall a range of spelling strategies such as morphemic knowledge, spelling generalisations and double letter combination rules.
- I can apply these rules to words in the text in a competitive game format.

Prior to reading part two of the story, recall both the events of part one, and the learning resource that accompanied it. The learning resource required students to use comprehension strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words and then use these words as the basis of a prediction of the events of part two. Discuss and display students' predictions, returning to them after reading the rest of the story, confirming or amending them as necessary.

Read the story as a class, or alternatively if you have a digital subscription you can listen to the audio recording. Instruct students to follow the same reading process as part one: as they read, they should note down any unfamiliar or complex words and share them with the class at the story's conclusion. Some possible words include:

- meridian
- wonkiness
- tangerine
- whiskery
- hullabaloo
- scampering
- foredeck
- commotion
- hurriedly
- antidote
- plummeting
- spiraling
- shudder
- carnage
- rudder

Write the class list down for your own records, but do not display it to the students. This list will eventually become the class spelling list and will also form the basis of a game: 'We're going on a WORD hunt'.

With a consideration of the morphology, spelling generalisations and spelling rules that you have explicitly taught the class, construct a series of question cards after reading the story and before the next lesson, where you will play the game with the students. The answers should be mostly made up from the words in the class list. Depending on the ability of the class, you may come up with all the questions yourself, or students may also generate some questions. Some possible question cards could include:

- We're going on a word hunt. We're going to spell a complex one. Find a word that demonstrates the doubling letter rule number one: if a one syllable word ends with a vowel and a consonant, double the consonant before adding the ending (sitting, tugging).
- We're going on a word hunt. We're going to spell a complex one. Find a word that demonstrates the doubling letter rule number two: find a word with two syllables, a short vowel at the beginning and a double consonant separating the two vowels (shudder, rudder, wuffle).
- We're going on a word hunt. We're going to spell a complex one. Find a word that demonstrates the doubling letter rule number three: if a two-syllable word starts with a stressed syllable, do not double the last consonant before adding the ending (plummeting). N.B. As this is a complex rule, it should only be included as a challenge card and after the rule has been explicitly taught to the class.
- We're going on a word hunt. We're going to spell a complex one. Sometimes, there are no rules for double letters! Find a word with a double letter and come up with a mnemonic to remember it. (For example: **necessary** – can a silly sausage remember how to spell necessary?)
- We're going on a word hunt. We're going to spell a complex one. Find a word that is named after the North African city Tangiers (tangerine).
- We're going on a word hunt. We're going to spell a complex one. Find a word with a prefix that means in front of or before. Challenge: can you think of any other words that use this prefix? (foredeck; forearm, forehead, forecast)

In the next lesson (and after the question cards have been constructed) break the class into teams. Display the question cards to the class and score points to the groups that can locate an appropriate word most quickly. After asking a series of question cards, award places to the teams with the highest points.

Finally, use the class list as a future spelling list. Discuss with the students whether the game helped them to remember spelling rules and therefore spell the complex words in the story correctly.

# Spring is a Bird

Poem by Lisa Varchol Perron | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

[EN2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E4LE04](#)

## Learning Intention:

I can use metalanguage to describe the language features used in a figurative poem so that I can understand how imagery is used to enhance characterisation and description.

## Success Criteria:

- I can understand the meaning of the metalanguage terms symbolism and zoomorphism and their role in characterisation.
- I can generate a list of adjectives based on an image.
- I can make connections between a poet's use of zoomorphism and the adjectives that describe the images.

## Essential knowledge:

- More information about how zoomorphism (imagery) is used to create complex meanings that can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Connotation, Imagery and Symbol](#).
- More information about how an idea or something non-human can also be characterised can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Character](#).

Prior to reading the poem, introduce students to the following terms:

- Symbolism: use of a symbol that represents something else, particularly in relation to a quality or concept developed and strengthened through repetition (See NSW K-10 Syllabus [Glossary](#)).
- Zoomorphism: the use of animal forms or symbols in art, literature, etc. (See the Collins Dictionary's entry on [Zoomorphism](#)).

Tell students that assigning human traits to animals in children's literature is very common. This is a type of characterisation and is called anthropomorphism. Brainstorm examples of anthropomorphism in children's literature (The Tales of Beatrix Potter, 'Farmer Duck' by Martin Waddell, 'The True Story of the Three Little Pigs' by Jon Scieszka).

Then inform students that zoomorphism is less common. It involves assigning animal traits to non-animals (to humans or objects). It is also a process of characterisation. An animal may also be a symbol of certain traits; an owl is wise and a lion is brave. There are examples of zoomorphism in ancient myths (such as Anubis, the jackal god) and also in modern superheroes (such as Spiderman, Batman and Catwoman).

Ask the class why an author might use zoomorphism. Students should recognise that comparing something or someone to an animal enhances description and characterisation.

For example, Catwoman immediately makes the responder think of a cat's traits: agile, fast and sometimes aggressive.

Explain that soon the class will read a poem that uses zoomorphism. It will compare each of the four seasons to an animal's traits. Before reading the poem, the class will conduct a poll on which animal will be assigned to which season.

First, present students with an image of the same landscape across the four seasons. Pause on each image and instruct students (in groups of 3 – 4) to brainstorm a list of adjectives about the season. For example, an image of a path in a park in spring could be described as vibrant, blossoming, chirpy. If you have a digital subscription, this can be done as an interactive activity on The School Magazine's website.

Using interactive presentation software, such as [Mentimeter](#), collate the adjectives into a word cloud for each season. Then, using the word clouds as inspiration, come up with a list of animals that have traits that link to these adjectives. For example, students may associate birds, small dogs or monkeys with spring.

Finally, conduct a class poll predicting which animals will be assigned to represent each season. (Mentimeter also has a poll function.)

Read the poem to the class and compare the results of the class poll to the animals that appear in the poem (bird, cat, possum, wolf). Discuss the animal choices with the students and whether they had suggestions that they believed better suited the seasons.

## The Battle of the Four Seasons

story by Cara Krenn | illustrated by Queenie Chan

[EN2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E4LA10](#)

### Learning Intention:

I am learning about the terms used in visual literacy so that I can understand the effect of an illustrator's choices.

### Success Criteria:

- I can identify and define the terms salience, framing and layout.
- I can experiment with a range of design choices to create meaning in my own images.
- I can explain why illustrators have made particular design choices.

### Essential Knowledge:

- More information about using visual design techniques to create meaning can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Code and Convention](#).
- More information about the role of goals and motivations in the process of characterisation can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Character](#).

Prior to introducing students to the story, define, explain and provide examples of three terms relating to visual design:

- Saliency: the part of the image that grabs your attention first. It is created by design choices such as the size of the object, its colour and use of contrasting colours, vectors, or its placement on the page in relation to the objects around it.
- Framing: a border around the image that can be soft or defined. Frames are used to separate or unite objects in the image.
- Layout: the placement of the characters and objects in the foreground, background, centre, margin, left, right, top or bottom.

The picture book 'Into the Forest' by Anthony Browne offers excellent examples of the above techniques.

Read the story aloud to the class, without revealing the illustrations. Alternatively, if you have a digital subscription you can listen to the audio recording. Ensure that students can answer the following questions:

- Who are the four main characters? (Four siblings: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.)
- At the beginning of the story, what is their relationship like? (They are in competition with each other.)
- At the end of the story, how has their relationship changed? (They have learned to take turns and exist in harmony.)

Provide students with the following extract from the beginning of the story:

"'I'm the greatest!' yelled Winter, spraying her icy breath.

'No, I am!' boomed Summer, with a hot gust of wind.

'I'm the most beautiful!' said Spring, flowers trailing behind her.

'No, I am!' argued Autumn, leaves dropping in his wake."

Following this, distribute a list of adjectives linked to the appearance and character traits of the four seasons. Words could include: blue, red, green, orange, frozen, fiery, verdant, changing. Students allocate these words to the appropriate character to build on their understanding of their separate characterisations. If you have a digital subscription this can be done as an interactive activity.

Next, ask students to illustrate this exchange, using the visual design techniques of saliency, framing and layout. For example, each of the seasons will need something eye-catching in their design, such as contrasting colours. Their framing should include strong or defined borders to indicate the competition between them and the layout should indicate they are all equal size as they are equally powerful.

After students have completed their illustrations, they can conduct a [Gallery Walk](#) to peer review the illustrations and to ensure that they have understood the three elements of design.

Reveal Queenie Chan’s three illustrations for the story. Compare the first and second illustrations (which use similar elements of design) with the third illustration. In all the illustrations, Chan uses the bold contrasting colours of the siblings’ hair to achieve salience. However, in the first two illustrations, she also uses vectors created by the siblings’ hair or breath. These vectors create defined edges, framing the siblings so that they look divided and in conflict with one another. The third image contrasts to the first two, as the salient image, the earth, is in the centre of the image. The siblings are standing around the earth with a soft frame between each of them. This shows that they are united at the end of the story.

Extension: instruct students to visit Queenie Chan’s [portfolio](#) to explore other examples of her design choices and use of salience, framing and layout.

## Will Wonders Never Cease? Millipedes to the Max

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

[EN2-CWT-01](#) | [AC9E4LE05](#)

### Learning Intention:

I am learning how to creatively consider my own experiences and imagination so that I can compose my own literary texts.

### Success Criteria:

- I can extract interesting facts from an article.
- I can combine the information found in the article with my background knowledge and my imagination.
- I can write a short engaging narrative based on my research and my own ideas.

### Essential Knowledge:

- More information about how thoughts can be organised in a way that a reader can understand can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Narrative](#).

Read the article as a class. After reading, explain that students will need to extract the interesting facts from the article. Distinguish between the skill of extracting facts from the skill of summarising information. Remind students that a summary requires a reader to distinguish between the main idea, the important details and interesting but less important information. In contrast, extracting facts allows students to choose the details they found most interesting in the article. They do not need to focus on the main idea, or prioritise the important information.

High interest facts that students may focus on include:

- Millipedes eat rotting plant material.

- A millipede has 1306 legs (in fact it is the only known millipede with more than 1000 legs).
- A prehistoric millipede was longer than an alligator.

Read a children's story about an insect aloud to the class. After reading identify the simple narrative structure (orientation, complication, resolution), the details that are based in facts about the insect and the details that are from the author's imagination. A suggested text is 'The Giant Jam Sandwich' by John Vernon Lord. In this story a town is invaded by four million wasps and the villagers decide to construct a giant jam sandwich to trap the insects. While this story is based on the author's imagination, it includes the factual information that wasps swarm sweet things.

Explain to students that they will now need to write a narrative about a millipede who causes problems for a group of humans or, conversely, a group of humans who cause problems for a millipede. Remind students that the story needs to be organised in a way that readers can understand (using the narrative structure) and combine details based in fact and details based in imagination.

You may wish to brainstorm lists of possible complications to assist students in the writing process. For example:

- A mad scientist accidentally reanimates fossils of giant millipedes, and they swarm.
- A millipede with 1306 legs wishes to run a marathon, but discovers that 653 pairs of sneakers is very expensive.
- A millipede breaks a leg and needs to ask the radiologist to count 337 legs in to find the break.

Provide students with the option of writing their story with, or without illustrations. You can challenge students to write their narrative as a poem, in the style of 'The Giant Jam Sandwich'.

## The Smallest Bird in the World

article by Karen Wasson | photos by Alamy

[EN2-OLC-01](#) | [AC9E4LY02](#)

### Learning Intention:

I am learning how to plan, rehearse and deliver oral presentations so that I can engage a specific audience and meet a specific purpose.

### Success Criteria:

- I can recognise a range of verbal techniques used by a speaker in an oral presentation.
- I can plan a range of verbal techniques to use in a short nonfiction presentation and undertake a series of rehearsals of my presentation.

- I can deliver my oral presentation to my peers to both inform and entertain them.

### Essential Knowledge:

- More information about communicating using sounds and tone of voice can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Code and Convention](#).

Before presenting the article or images to the class, read the introductory paragraph (in purple). Prior to delivering your oral presentation to the class, rehearse your delivery with the following considerations in mind:

- Tone – the way that you speak to the audience, revealing your emotions or attitude about the topic. (To deliver this paragraph you should convey a tone of wonderment, surprise and enthusiasm for the subject.)
- Pitch – the highness or lowness of your voice, which makes speech sound natural and conveys emotion. (Punctuation guides pitch, with question marks indicating an upward inflection and exclamation marks indicating an increase in volume.)
- Pace – the speed of delivery, which further adds emotion and emphasis on key details. (Consider where to pause for effect, including after the rhetorical questions and after key points such as the size of the nest and the egg.)
- Props – including visuals or physical props to help illustrate your point to the audience. (If possible use a twenty-cent piece and a coffee bean for effect.)

After delivering your presentation to the class, discuss the reasons why it was successful. Use the following points to structure discussion:

- What was the purpose of the speech? (Both to inform and also to entertain)
- Was that the first time reading it aloud? (No. It required the speaker to identify the words and phrases to emphasise; this is called planning. It also required the speaker to deliver it a few times in preparation, maybe in front of a mirror; this is called rehearsing.)
- Why was it a successful presentation? (Students will provide a range of answers. Record their responses to use in the next step.)

Explain to students that they will be delivering an engaging oral presentation to a specific audience – their peers. Their presentation should contain interesting facts and details but should also be delivered in a way that is entertaining for the audience.

Inform students that they will be peer assessing each other according to jointly developed criteria. Using the information gathered from the discussion (above) construct success criteria for an engaging oral presentation. Criteria could include:

- The speaker's tone of voice suits the topic, audience, and purpose.
- The speaker delivers the presentation slowly and clearly.
- Speaker uses pace and pauses for effect.

Instruct students to write their own short presentation about an interesting animal. It should contain a range of facts, use a variety of sentence types (including rhetorical questions) and



provide opportunities for incorporating visuals and props. Alternatively, provide them with an extract from a high interest article. Some suggested articles from The School Magazine include:

- Will Wonders Never Cease? Doggy Diversity by Zoe Disher (Blast Off, Issue 10 2019)
- Where the Blue Bees Fly by Carolyn Galbraith (Orbit, Issue 10 2018)
- Yuumm Yum! by Susan Letts (Touchdown, Issue 6 2019)

Students should deliver their presentations in small groups. One member of the group should peer assess each speaker based on the success criteria determined by the class. Feedback can be provided using a format such as Two Stars and a Wish.

## Goodnight, Goodnight

poem by Kate Rietema | illustrated by [Christopher Nielsen](#)

[EN2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E4LE04](#)

### Learning Intention:

I am learning how to recognise poetic devices so that I can experiment with how I write original poems.

### Success Criteria:

- I can identify a range of poetic devices.
- I can define the technique of internal rhyme and explain its effect.
- I can experiment with internal rhyme in my own poetry.

### Essential knowledge:

- More information about how poetry uses an agreed upon system of communication can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Code and Convention](#).

Before presenting the poem to the class, ask the following question:

What 'rules' does a poet need to follow while they are writing poetry?

Write down all of the class suggestions, even if they contradict each other. Allow students to debate on certain topics, such as whether rhyming is an essential component of a poem. Eventually, sort the suggestions into a list of the essential codes and conventions of poetry. These include:

- It looks like a poem (short lines, rather than continuous sentences)
- It uses imagery (language techniques such as similes, metaphors, personification)
- It uses sound devices (language techniques such as rhythm, rhyme, repetition, onomatopoeia, alliteration, sibilance, assonance)
- It tells a story or unites around a theme.

Explain that some conventions are so common, we often expect that every poem will feature it. An example of this is rhyme.

Read the poem aloud to the class, or alternatively listen to the audio recording on The School Magazine website. After reading the poem, consult the class code and convention list and assess which conventions the poem uses. Students should recognise that it looks like a poem, contains a range of imagery (the grass waves goodbye; shadows like lumps on a long) and uses sound devices (rhythm, rhyme and repetition). Furthermore, it is united by a theme, describing a short moment in a child's evening routine.

Draw students' attention more closely to the rhyming structure and ask them to identify the pattern. The second and fourth line of each stanza rhyme. More unusually, the first and third line do not rhyme with each other, but rhyme within the line. This technique is called internal rhyme or middle rhyme. (For more information on this technique, visit the Literary Devices page: [Internal Rhyme](#).)

Read other examples of internal rhyme to the class, such as the poems 'The Owl and the Pussycat' by Edward Lear or 'Galoshes' by Rhoda W. Bacmeister. Then ask students why they think poets use internal rhyme? Explain that internal rhyme increases the musicality of a poem and makes it very pleasant to listen to.

Challenge students to experiment with internal rhyme in their own poetry. Start with a broad topic such as walking through the jungle. Brainstorm a list of animals people encounter in the jungle and pair the animals with the sounds they make. Then for each example of onomatopoeia, instruct students to find a rhyming word with the assistance of a dictionary such as [RhymeZone](#). For example:

monkey	shriek	creak
elephant	snort	thought
lion	roar	snore

Finally, students combine these pairs of rhyming words into a poem that uses internal rhyme. For example:

An orchestra surrounded me as I walked through the jungle.  
A monkey shrieking on the branches creaking,  
An elephant's loud snort while I was lost in thought,  
And a lion's roar; 'Don't eat me!' I implore.

## A Train in Africa

story by Elizabeth Williams | illustrated by [Greg Holfeld](#)

[EN2-RECOM-01](#) | [AC9E4LA03](#)

**Learning Intention:**

I am learning how to vary my writing style so that I can match the intended topic, purpose and audience.

**Success Criteria:**

- I can identify which text type a text is.
- I can explain what gives a text authority.
- I can write an information report to provide additional details for a narrative text.

**Essential knowledge:**

- More information about the factors that make a text trustworthy can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Authority](#).

Read the story aloud to the class and view the accompanying illustrations. Alternatively, if you have a digital subscription, you can listen to the audio recording on The School Magazine's website.

After reading the story, ask students the following questions:

- Is this a fiction or nonfiction text? (Fiction, based on a real event.)
- What text type is it? (It is a narrative.)
- How do you know? (It has a beginning, middle and an end and describes the characters' thoughts and feelings. It does not contain many facts and details about the Train of Hope because this information is not important to the main characters Bongani and Ugogo.)

Once you have established that this is a fiction text and contains the textual features of a narrative, draw students' attention to Jool's call out box on page 23:

You can discoverrr more about the Train of Hope if you search on the internet. It's such a wonderrrrful scheme!

Discuss the authority of Jool's opinion with the class. Is this one sentence assessment of the Train of Hope (that it is a wonderful scheme) trustworthy? Explain that students need to consider certain factors when assessing whether they can trust an opinion: is the person an expert, is it written in the correct style and does it draw information from an appropriate website? Students should conclude that Jools is not an expert and doesn't provide enough research. Therefore, Jools does not give a trustworthy opinion. (Challenge: you may want to explain to students that Jool's hasn't been given the space to have authority over the text. She cannot explain a reliable opinion in one sentence.)

Explain that students will listen to a radio program from a reliable website which provides a lot of information about Phelophepa – The Train of Hope.

[The World in Progress: South Africa's train of hope](#)

The news source is Deutsche Welle (DW), a German state-owned international broadcaster. It is like the BBC or our ABC. Listen to the six-minute episode with the students. While they are listening, or after the broadcast, compile a list of facts about Phelophepa. These include:

- The size of the train (19 carriages)
- The services offered (a huge range including optical, dental, psychology and even oncology)
- The number of patients seen (200 000 each year)
- The locations it visits (70 different stops)
- The cost for patients (60 Euro cents, which is approximately 95 Australian cents)

Once the class has developed a comprehensive list of facts about the Phelophepa, explain that students will write their own afterword to the story. This afterword will be structured as an information report and, by using the details in the DW broadcast, have authority.

Provide a success criteria for the afterword to scaffold student responses. For example:

- A short title that tells the reader the subject of the report.
- An introductory sentence that gives a general statement about the subject.
- Two or three short paragraphs that provide essential facts and details about the subject.
- A concluding sentence that gives an assessment on the subject.
- Uses the following language features: noun groups, present tense, action word groups.

## The Dragon

poem by Amy Dunjey | illustrated by Rosemary Fung

EN2-RECOM-01 | AC9E4LA04

### Learning Intention:

I am learning how to use linking devices so that I can understand how to compose cohesive texts.

### Success Criteria:

- I can define the features of a cohesive text.
- I can identify and explain how the linking device of pronouns works in a poem.
- I can compose my own poem using pronouns for cohesion.

Before reading the poem, revise/familiarise students with the grammatical features of pronouns and pronoun reference (suggested definitions are from the [Australian Curriculum glossary](#)).

Next, explain to students that pronouns are very important for cohesion: the grammatical and lexical features that bind the different parts of a text together and give it unity. Writers

use repetition, connectives and conjunctions (among other things) to achieve cohesion. Pronouns are a type of reference word that play an essential role in ensuring that a text is cohesive. Provide students with the following sentence and ask them to identify why it lacks cohesion:

As I walked down the road he realised that my shirt was on backwards and his shoes untied.

Students should recognise that the sentence uses a mix of first (I, my) and third (he, his) person pronouns. It is unclear whether there is one person who is unusually dressed, or instead the narrator has a backwards shirt and a second person appears with untied shoes.

Once the definition and functions of pronouns and their relationship to text cohesion has been established, read the poem to students. You may wish to play pronoun bingo, either providing students with a sheet prefilled with personal and possessive pronouns, or asking students to predict which pronouns will appear in the poem. After reading, provide students with a list of the pronouns that appeared:

- Personal: my, I, it, they, he
- Possessive: their, our

Ask students to read the poem independently and carefully. Challenge them to try to replace the pronouns with their reference nouns (note, this cannot be done for I and my as the poem is narrated in first person). Some examples of rewritten lines include:

I watched the dragon pass the laundromat

Until the children heard the bell

Now the children's classroom

Discuss whether these lines are an improvement on the original poem or whether they sound less sophisticated. Ensure that students understand that not only does the repetition of reference nouns make a piece of writing sound less engaging, it also interrupts the meter of a poem and often makes the lines of a stanza too long and clunky.

Students should also identify that some lines cannot be rewritten and the pronouns cannot be eliminated. These include:

could not believe their eyes.

until they heard the bell. (At a stretch, this could be rewritten as 'until the bell was heard by the students.')

Therefore, students should recognise that pronouns are not only an essential stylistic feature, but also an essential component of grammar to make a poem cohesive.

Finally, write a summary of one of the stories in this edition of Blast Off using the 'Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then' strategy. For example a summary of 'A Train in Africa' might be written as:

Somebody: Bongani

Wanted: the train to arrive as he had been waiting many months.

But: he had to hurry very quickly with his grandmother Ugogo to meet the train when it finally arrived.

So: the kind train driver Mandla ensured that they were able to make it to the train platform.

Then: Bongani and Ugogo were able to be seen by the medical team and receive glasses.

Students should write a narrative poem based on their summary. After writing their poem they should highlight all the examples of pronouns. For example:

Bongani looked across the veld,  
He trained and strained his ears.  
His grandmother asked him to wait some more,  
She was confident it would one day appear.

## What's the Magic Word?

story by Wendy Cheek | illustrated by Amy Golbach

[EN2-OLC-01](#) | [AC9E4LY02](#)

### Learning Intention:

I am learning how to use a range of interaction skills in a drama game so that I can participate in a humorous presentation to an audience.

### Success Criteria:

- I can identify examples of humour in a text and explain why they are humorous.
- I can experiment with the interaction skills of offering and accepting to advance humour in an improvised scene.
- I can deliver an improvised scene to an audience.

Before reading, ask students to be text detectives. While reading they look for answers to the following questions:

- What is the purpose of this text? (To entertain)
- Is this a serious or a humorous text? (Humorous)
- What are some examples of how this text is serious OR humorous? (The text is funny due to Luca's wordplay. Some scenarios are absurd due to the word he substitutes for please: 'Mum, can I go over to Zoe's, TADPOLE' Other scenarios cause trouble for Luca, such as when his grandad tries to serve him Cod Liver Oil when he substitutes stomachache for please.)

Read the story aloud to the class, or if you have a digital subscription listen to the recording on The School Magazine website. Discuss the answers.

Generate a class list of other word games that they have read about or played. Some examples might include:

- The word association game.
- Auntie Cathie / The Suitcase game.
- Paul Jennings's story 'Without a Shirt'.

Outline the task for the class: they will participate in a drama improvisation game based on the word game Luca invented. The class will then determine whether any groups get themselves into as much danger as Luca, when he almost had to drink Cod Liver Oil.

Provide a definition of three key drama terms:

- Improvisation: a type of drama where the plot, characters and dialogue are made up on the spot.
- Offer: to suggest, request or demand of the other characters to drive the narrative.
- Accept (also called yield): to say yes to all the offers of other group members, even if you don't want to.

Prior to commencing the activity you may wish to play the warm up game, [Yes Let's](#) to consolidate students' understanding of these terms.

Then, conduct the drama game: 'What's the Magic Word' using the steps below:

First, ask all students to write an unexpected noun / noun group on a sheet of paper. Use the examples of 'tadpole' and 'stomachache' and explain that these words will become a substitute for please. Place them in a hat, jar, or similar.

Second, divide the class into teams of three to four.

Third, decide whether your groups need the opportunity to rehearse. If this is the case, conduct the first few rounds with all groups attempting to devise a short skit based on the word and without an audience.

Fourth, whether in the rehearsal stage, or the performance stage, play the game using these rules. Ask one group member to select a word from the hat. Then provide the group with a location and characters (e.g., zoo and students on an excursion). Explain that they have two minutes to deliver a performance which uses their chosen word instead of please as much as possible. They should also have a humorous complication.

Finally, repeat this activity until all groups have had a chance to perform. Collate a list of the humorous complications that appear in the skits and discuss how they compare to Luca's problem in the story.

# Pineapple and Tomato Paste

play by [Mark Konik](#) | illustrated by Michel Streich

[EN2-UARL-01](#) | [AC9E4LY03](#)

## Learning Intention:

I am learning how a composer uses tension in an imaginative text so that I can understand the features which make texts engaging to read.

## Success Criteria:

- I can define the literary term tension.
- I can plot the changes in tension over time using a line graph.
- I can explain why a composer uses rising tension in a text.

## Essential knowledge:

- More information about how the author has a unique way of structuring textual features such as tension can be found in the English Textual Concepts video [Style](#).

Prior to reading the play, define the term tension: the elements of a story that create emotions such as worry, fear or irritation on the part of both the characters and, in turn, the reader. The highest point on the graph (the most tense moment) is called the climax.

Brainstorm a list of common examples of tension in a text: cliffhangers, flashforwards, flashbacks, life-threatening situations and misunderstandings between characters.

Read the play as a class. After reading, highlight the steadily rising tension throughout the play.

Create a tension graph on the board. Label the x-axis (horizontal line) time. Label the y-axis (vertical line) rising tension. Then complete the graphs using the steps outlined below. You may initially model how to plot tension before gradually releasing responsibility to the students.

First, as a class determine how to measure time in the play. The most obvious way would be based on the series of phone conversations that Brent has / the number of operators that Brent speaks to. However, students may come up with other ingenious ways to measure time.

Second, label the time increments in the play along the x-axis.

Third, for each time and event associated rank the level of tension felt by Brent. This is achieved through making a cross sign at the appropriate junction of the x-axis and y-axis. Again, you may wish to lead a class discussion initially on how to make this judgement.

Finally, once all time periods have been ranked according to tension, connect all the crosses to make a line graph.



Discuss the results of the tension graph with the class. Students should notice a steadily increasing line, with a slight dip at the end, when Brent believed that he had finally found someone who would make his pizza. The tension then rises further still at the play's conclusion when Brent finds out that the shop has run out of pineapple and his problem remains unresolved.

Then discuss the function of tension in this play. Usually, the emotion of tension is shared by the character and audience. However, in this play while Brent becomes increasingly agitated as he is transferred through a series of operators, the audience finds the situation funny rather than stressful.

Extension: explain that tension is a key feature of Mark Konik's writing, however it is often used for different effects. Ask students to complete a tension graph on another one of his stories and compare the different ways that he uses tension in imaginative texts. (Suggested story: 'Loud and Clear', Orbit Issue 1, 2023.)