Jools and Vern and the Mystery of Loch MacNurk

story by Geoffrey McSkimming | illustrated by Peter Sheehan

EN2-CWT-01 | AC9E4LY06

Learning Intention:

I am learning to identify effective examples of descriptive language, dialogue and character actions in a model text so that I can use these in my own imaginative writing.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify key features in a model text
- I can discuss the impact of word choices, dialogue and characterisation on meaning
- I can plan and write an imaginative piece of writing.

Essential knowledge:

For more information about teaching figurative language, take a look at the Reading - Literary Devices resource on the NSW Department of Education website.

Understanding text:

If you have a digital subscription, you can complete a True/False interactive to check student understanding and analysis of the text.

Look closely at the following extract from page 4:

> As the sunlight filtered across the shadowy parts, Jools and Vern could see, fleetingly, a pair of glinting eyes—as blue as the water in the Loch—and a long, sturdy set of jaws. These jaws appeared to be opening and closing, gaping widely and then snapping shut, in a hungry, savage way.

Ask students to use a highlighter to locate the following in the extract:

- A simile (as blue as the water in the Loch)

- -ing verbs (glinting, opening, closing, gaping, snapping)
- Adjectives (long, sturdy, hungry, savage)

After locating these features in the extract, discuss the following as a class:

- Which words in the description of the 'beastie' make it seem frightening? (suggested answer: hungry, savage)
- Why has the author used a simile to describe the eyes of the 'beastie?' (suggested answer: It helps the reader visualize the eyes – but in this instance, we find out later that this is not a real 'beastie', so it is a hint that when Jools and Vern see the blue eyes, they are actually just seeing water.)
- Why are so many -ing verbs used in the description of the 'beastie?' (suggested answer: these active verbs show the 'beastie' doing frightening things, and show the creature as an active being, actively chasing the airship.)

Look closely at the following extract from the story from page 4:

> 'It's a beastie!' cried Vern, jerking up and down as he tried to steer the airship steadily. 'It's an underwater serpent, the likes of which you were telling me about!' Jools peered over the side, her eyes wide, her fur tingling. 'Oh, my spots!' she gasped.

For each character identify one piece of dialogue and one physical reaction. Use the table below to record answers:

	Vern	Jools
Dialogue		
Physical response		

Discuss the following questions with your class:

- What kind of punctuation is used to show panic and fear in the dialogue? (suggested answer: each piece of dialogue has an exclamation mark.)
- When Jools gasps 'oh my spots!' what does she mean? (suggested answer: this could mean 'oh my goodness!' it is a general expression of alarm or surprise).
- When the author describes how Vern and Jools speak, which words are used? Why are these words better than 'said.' (suggested answer: 'cried' and 'gasped' – both of these words are better than 'said' because they give a more specific description of how the dialogue is delivered by the character and therefore is better at expressing emotions).
- Looking at the physical responses by both Jules and Vern, what do they show about the characters reaction to the 'beastie?' (suggested answer: both show fear – Jools

experiences fur tingling – like goosebumps while Vern is almost panicking jerking up and down.)

Creating text: (spelling, creating written text, handwriting, UARL)

Explain to students that they are now going to plan and create their own ancient monster lurking in the depths of a Loch in Scotland.

If students require some inspiration, they might like to take a look at a woodcut showing sea monsters, created by Sebastian Munster in 1550 on the State Library of NSW website.

They can use the table below to plan their ancient monster.

Physical appearance	Actions/behaviours	Sounds

Next, students will need to think about how their main character responds when they see the ancient monster. They will need to include dialogue and physical responses to show the character's reactions. Use the table below to plan this.

Dialogue	Physical response

Students are now ready to write a short story in which there is a sighting of the creature by the main character. The emphasis of this piece of writing should be using descriptive writing to help readers visualize the creature. They should include the following in their story:

A description of the creature – what it looks like, sounds like, how it moves – encourage students to use similes or other figurative language techniques to describe their creature.

A description of how the main character responds to the sighting – try to show rather than tell the emotional response – allow the reader to infer what is being felt rather than saying "He was frightened."

Assessment for/as learning:

Use the Stage 2 Assessment and Evaluation Rubric: Imaginative Text found on The School Magazine website.

Will Wonders Never Cease? Talking Stamps

article by Mina | illustrated by Fifi Colston

EN2-OLC-01 | AC9E4LY07

Learning Intention:

I am learning to use appropriate verbal communication tools and persuasive language so that I can present my ideas to an audience.

Success Criteria:

- I can work with a partner to develop a new product idea, and prepare a visual representation
- I can prepare a proposal using persuasive language to present my ideas
- I can speak in front of my classmates, using appropriate volume, eye contact and gestures.

Essential knowledge:

More information about the Bhutanese talking stamps can be found on The vinyl factory website, including an audio recording you can share with the class and information about the inventor of the talking stamps, American adventurer, Burt Todd.

Oral language and communication (One or the other)

Prior to reading the article, write the phrase 'Talking Stamps' onto the board and ask students to suggest what a talking stamp might be. Ask a student to write the suggestions in a list on the board as a record of the conversation.

As a class, read the article to find out more about talking stamps. After reading, refer back to the list and compare the ideas on the board with the list from the class.

The article finishes with a question: What material would you use if you could design and make your own stamp? Ask students to work with a partner to prepare an answer to the question posed. They should complete the following steps:

- Brainstorm a list of possible materials for making a new type of stamp
- Once a list has been created, each pair should select ONE idea from the list. The chosen material should be something highly unique
- Each pair should create a visual mock-up design for their unique new stamp and write a description to accompany the visual design explaining how it will work.

Before the pairs start working on their persuasive proposal for their new type of stamp, introduce the idea of an elevator pitch (defined as 'a concise, persuasive, easily understood explanation of an idea that can be delivered quickly' on the Scholastic Shark Tank teaching guide.)

Work together as a class to create a model elevator pitch (as suggested in the abovementioned Scholastic Shark Tank teaching guide) for an item in the classroom. Use the scaffold on page 8 of the Scholastic resource. Alter the scaffold by changing the third question to: "it works by…" to allow students to explain their product in more detail.

Sample using a classroom item:

> I'd like to tell you about a new product, which will revolutionise how you teach in your classroom. This is the latest technology designed by and for teachers, enabling them to provide feedback to their students in a timely manner.
>
> It's a self-inking stamp!
>
> It works by pressing a small ink picture or phrase onto your student's work. The phrases could express that the student has succeeded in their work with a comment like "amazing work!" or it could stamp on a checklist, which you can then tick the items achieved and show students the areas that they need to work on. Simply place the stamp onto the desired page and press down quickly. These stamps will cut down your marking time allowing you more time to focus on your planning and your students. No need for messy old ink pads anymore!
>
> It costs $2 for a basic image like a star with a simple phrase, and up to $10 for a more detailed personalised checklist.
>
> You can get it by visiting our website and making your selections. Which design will you choose?

Project the sample onto the board and ask students to identify words or phrases that they consider to be persuasive – that draw the intended audience in and make them want the product.

Suggested answers:

- 'Revolutionise,' 'latest technology', 'messy old ink pads' (these are all examples which describe how modern and advanced the item is making it desirable)
- 'designed by and for teachers' (this identifies the audience and gives credibility to the product)
- 'Simply' (this word choice shows the ease with which the product can be used)
- 'you,' 'your' (these are examples of 'direct address' where the speaker will talk directly to the audience, drawing them into the presentation and making them imagine themselves using the product.)
- 'Which design will you choose?' (Finishing with a rhetorical question, leaves the audience thinking about the product after the presentation is finished.)

Now pairs are ready to write their own proposal using the scaffold and the suggested word choices and persuasive techniques.

Prior to delivering their presentations, students are encouraged to annotate their elevator pitch with the following:

- Underline words or phrases that should be emphasised
- Mark with a vertical line down moments where a pause is required
- Colour code the script so that both speakers in the pair know which words they must deliver
- Comment on a location where a hand gesture or facial expression may help convince the audience to choose your product.

Assessment for/as learning:

After completing their presentation, ask students to complete an 'exit slip' style reflection. Use the following:

From 1 (not at all) to 5 (aced it), how do you feel about your product presentation?
1 2

3 4 5
Explain why you feel this way.
What might you do differently next time you deliver a presentation?

Parrots are Pretty

Poem by Rebecca Gardyn Levington | illustrated by Anna Bron

EN2-RECOM-01 | AC9E4LA03

Learning Intention:

I am learning to understand the purposes and structures of different texts so I can appreciate how text types can be manipulated for different purposes.

Success Criteria:

- I can compare and contrast different text types
- I can investigate the purpose of texts
- I can read and comprehend informative texts in different formats
- I can question the common features of different text types.

Essential knowledge:

Oral language and communication or Vocabulary (One or the other)

Prior to reading the poem, ask students the following question:

- If you were going to write a factual text about parrots, what kind of text would it be?

Discuss the answers given as they are offered, asking each student why that text type is suitable for a factual text about parrots.

Then ask a follow up question:

- Can you write a factual text in the form of a poem?

Before students offer answers to the question, allocate one wall of the classroom as a 'yes' answer, one wall of the classroom a 'no' answer and the middle of the room as a 'not sure' answer. Ask students to move to the part of the classroom that aligns with their thoughts on the question. Once students have a chance to move to their chosen answer, ask students on each side of the room to offer an explanation for their answer. Hear arguments from both sides of the room.

Students return to their seats. Ask students to draw a Venn diagram, if you would like to use a digital version of the Venn diagram head to the digital learning selector website. The circle on the left should be labelled 'Information texts' and the circle on the right should be labelled 'Poems.' Students are to list features of poems and information texts in their Venn diagram and see whether there is any cross over in the middle. You will return to this Venn diagram later.

Understanding text: (Reading fluency, reading comprehension, UARL)

Students are now ready to read the poem 'Parrots are Pretty.' Read the poem as a class.

After reading, ask students to identify whether the text is a poem or an information text. Discuss why.

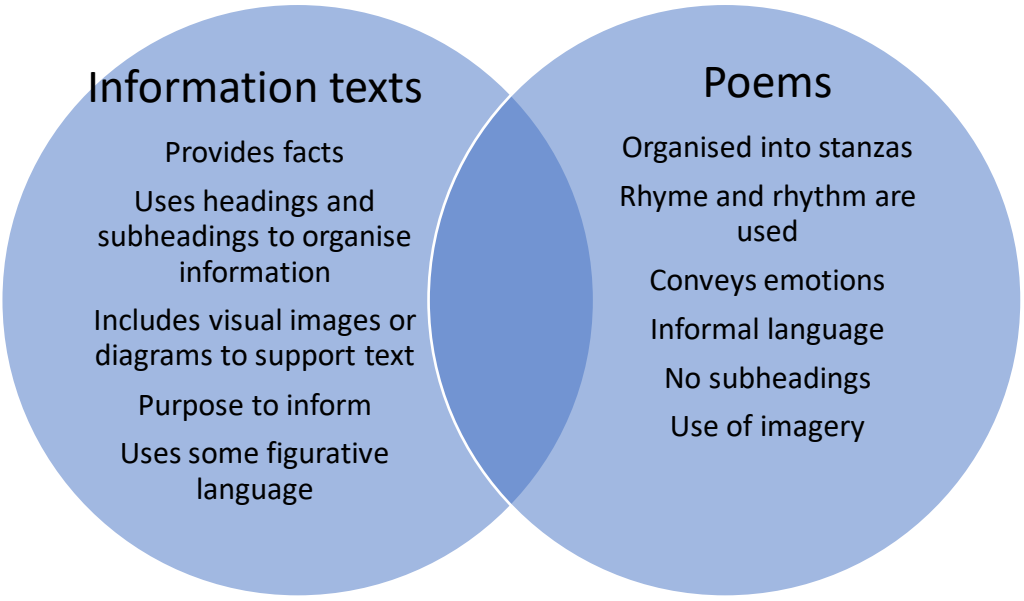
Return to the previous question: Can you write a factual text in the form of a poem?

Ask students to now move to the part of the classroom with their new answer. (The expected response should now be that most, if not all, students will answer 'yes.' This is because they have seen an example of an informative poem.)

If you have a digital subscription, you can complete the interactive crossword to check student understanding of the poem.

Turn to 'Firehawks' on page 11 of this issue of Blast Off! Read the article together as a class. Return to the Venn diagram from earlier. Now that students have read a factual poem about parrots and an information text article about firehawks, ask them to identify text features for each text type. Focus on the differences at this stage.

Sample:



Ask students to look at the poem and the article again – are there any common features? These common features can be put into the overlapping section in the Venn diagram.

Sample answer:

Use of rhetorical questions, direct address to include the audience, factual information about the subject matter.

Creating text:

Extension Task: Use the information from the article 'Will Wonders Never Cease? Talking Stamps' on page 9 of this issue of Blast Off! And write an informative poem about the Bhutanese Talking Stamps. Students can share these with their classmates for enjoyment.

Assessment for/as learning:

Ask students the following question. Have them move to stand in the part of the room according to their answer (yes on one side, no on the other and not sure in the middle.)

- Is it ok to bend the rules of a text type?

Once students have decided upon their answer, ask them to elaborate and explain why they have chosen their response. Hear from both sides of the room (and those who are unsure).

Firehawks

article by Karen Wasson | photos by alamy

EN2-CWT-01 | AC9E4LE05

Learning Intention:

I am learning to use factual information to create a character so that I can compose a short narrative.

Success Criteria:

- I can use facts to inform my character development
- I can plan a story using a narrative structure
- I can write a story in which I deliberately position the reader to feel a certain way about a character.

Essential knowledge:

Information on characterisation in narratives can be found in the English Textual Concepts video on Character on The School Magazine website.

Understanding text:

After reading 'Firehawk' ask students to create a dot point summary in which the behaviours of firehawks are listed.

In pairs or threes, students are to compare their lists and make sure they haven't missed any vital information. In pairs (or threes), students should discuss which information about firehawks surprised them the most. Students can report back to the class and compare ideas.

Creating text:

Students are to compose a narrative in which the story is told from the perspective of a Firehawk. To begin, they should develop a character. In order to do this, they can follow the steps outlined below:

- Develop a character – choose one of the individual birds pictured in the article as your main character.
- View the short video about developing Character on The School Magazine website.
- Complete a character profile using the template below:

Goal	Motivation
How others view them	Personality
Feelings	Actions

Discuss the structure of a narrative with the class. Project a Freytag's pyramid diagram onto the board. on the board. This can be found as Resource 12 in Stage 2 Unit 1 Fantastic Mr Fox (page 141). Students then use this structure to plan their firehawk story. A Freytag's pyramid planning template is available for students to use, this can be found as Resource 13 in Stage 2 Unit 1 Fantastic Mr Fox (page 142). Students should also refer back to their character profile to remind themselves of the firehawk's goals and motivations. Consider the other characters required to complete the story and list those as part of the plan.

Allow students time to write their stories, referring back to their plans during the writing process.

Assessment for/as learning:

Encourage students to complete a self-assessment by annotating their story. Ask students to:

- Circle or outline an extract where they have developed a connection between the firehawk character and the reader.

- Underline an example of where they have used dialogue to show something about their character's feelings.
- Put an asterisk next to a paragraph where they have developed some suspense or excitement.

My Dad's a Marshmallow

story by Heather Gallagher | illustrated by Tohby Riddle

EN2-UARL-01 | AC9E4LE04

Learning Intention:

I am learning about metaphors and word play so that I can understand characterisation in a text.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify metaphors
- I can discuss how metaphor can be used to show aspects of character
- I can create my own metaphor.

Essential knowledge:

Information and suggested teaching strategies for literary techniques including metaphors are included in the Stage 2 Reading - literary devices resource.

Oral language and communication or Vocabulary

Prior to reading the story write the title on the board: My Dad's a Marshmallow.

Ask students to contribute ideas on what this phrase means. You can draw out answers by asking whether the dad in the story is actually made from marshmallow, or if it means something entirely different. Ask students to think about what a dad and a marshmallow could have in common.

Possible answers from students could include the following:

- It is a metaphor
- The dad is soft or sweet
- The story is a fantasy story in which the characters are different sweets and lollies.

Next ask the class to suggest answers to the following question:

- Is it a nice thing to compare your Dad to a marshmallow? Why or why not?

Answers from students could vary, so ask students to elaborate by considering the why/why not? Part of the question.

Once the initial discussion has occurred, ask students to complete a think pair share activity in which they predict what the story might be about. They are to think about the following:

- The Dad character
- The plot line – including complication
- How the child feels about their dad

Understanding text:

Read the first part of the story together until 'Because Dad is embarrassing! Super embarrassing!'

Complete the table comparing other dads with the narrator's dad:

Other people's dads	The narrator's dad

Suggested answers include:

Other people's dads are surfing pros, winning marathons, and karate black belts. The narrator's dad plays with the dog, snoozes on the couch and plays scrabble. He is a softie.

Discuss the following questions:

- How does the narrator feel about their dad? (suggested answer: embarrassed)

- How do we know? (the narrator repeats the word 'embarrassing')
- Do you find your parents/guardians embarrassing sometimes?
- Do you know why the narrator calls his dad a marshmallow yet? (some students might have noticed the phrase 'Mum says Dad is a softie…' but its ok if nobody has worked it out yet!)
- Choose one of the other dads mentioned, can you create a metaphor to describe one of the other dads? (an example could compare the marathon running dad to an express train (my dad is an express train).

Continue reading the story until 'I try to get his attention, put a hand across my throat in the universal sign for 'quit it, Dad!' (on page 16).

Write a list of all the things that dad does on camp that cause embarrassment for Jordie (the narrator).

Suggestions include:

- Kissing Mum goodbye
- Knitting on the bus
- Bringing Jordie's toy for him
- Crying during the movie
- Wearing a wetsuit
- Singing a song loudly

Ask students the following questions:

- What do YOU think about Jordie's dad?
- Would you like to have Jordie's dad as your dad? Why or why not
- Is your dad/guardian more like Jordie's dad or the other dads?

Continue reading to the end of the story. As a class, discuss the following:

- What heroic action does Jordie's dad take in the climax of the story?
- How does this change Jordie's perspective on his dad?
- Why does Jordie use the metaphor 'My dad's a marshmallow?'
- Do you think this is a good way to describe Jordie's dad? Why or why not?

- Can you think of another metaphor for Jordie's dad?

Creating text:

Students are to create their own metaphor for a person they know and love. They are to follow the pattern below:

My _____ is a _____.

Students may like to write multiple of these for different people in their lives.

After creating their own metaphor, students are to write a paragraph justifying their choice of metaphor.

They can use the following scaffold to assist:

I wrote a metaphor about my _____. I compared them to a _____. I chose this comparison because _____.

It shows that I think my _____ is _____.

Assessment for/as learning:

Complete a peer assessment. Students are to swap their metaphor and the paragraph they have written to justify their choice of metaphor. They complete the peer review checklist below:

My partner's metaphor:

- Compared a friend or family member with something relevant
- Made sense and helped me understand my partner's friend or family member
- Was explained well in the paragraph
- Caused me to respond in a particular way.

The Terrible, Terrible Noise

poem by Kevin Christopher Snipes | illustrated by Dante Hookey

EN2-UARL-01 | AC9E4LY10

Learning Intention:

I am learning about language techniques used in a poem so that I can understand how these help readers connect with the people and events in the poem.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify the use of rhyme, rhetorical questions, exclamations and stanza structure in a poem
- I can explain how the techniques help interest readers in the mystery of the poem
- I can evaluate how effectively the poem connects with readers through language techniques and structures.

Essential knowledge:

You can find the word 'rhyme' defined in this glossary created by the Department of Education. The Department of Education also provides information about teaching phonological awareness on their website. You can find detailed information about different text types including reviews English A to Z support pages. You will need to scroll down to 'persuasive texts.'

Oral language and communication or Vocabulary (One or the other)

Before reading the poem, ask students to write down their own definition of the word 'rhyme.' If possible, use index cards or small slips of paper. Tell students they are not to show anybody else their definition yet.

Ask students to find a partner and show each other their definition for the word 'rhyme.' They then work together to combine their definition and reword it so that it is closer to the real meaning of the word.

Pairs now find a second pair to connect with and form a new group of 4. Once more, students compare and combine the two definitions to refine it. They can write a new, final more polished definition for the word 'rhyme.'

At this stage, bring the whole class back together and ask each group of 4 to contribute their definition. The cards can be tacked to the board.

If possible, hand each group of 4 a dictionary (if there are different kinds of dictionaries available, it would work well to give each group a different type of dictionary) and ask them to look up the definition for 'rhyme.' Use the dictionary definitions to decide which of the definitions on the board created by students is the best – a class vote might be needed.

Now that students have a dictionary definition, it is time to check their understanding by giving each group of 4 a different word from the list below. Set a timer for 2 minutes and ask the groups to list as many words as possible to rhyme with their given word.

- Rocket
- Noise
- Scared
- Storm
- Swear
- Blast
- Strange

Understanding text:

Project the first two stanzas of the poem onto the board:

Oh, what's that strange and awful noise?
It sounds like cannons warring!
I'd swear that it's a thunderstorm
except it isn't pouring.

Or could it be the engine blast
of rockets that are soaring?
I should go out and check and yet
I'm scared to go exploring.

Ask students to listen to the poem being read aloud and then identify the rhyming words. Ask them if they notice a pattern – and then show them how every second word rhymes.

Also point out that in this poem, the rhyme carries over into the second stanza, rather than starting again. This is called a rhyming pattern.

Ask the class to answer the following questions:

- What effect does the use of rhyme have in this poem? (suggested answer: It helps create a beat or rhythm and it emphasises the words, making them stand out.
- Aside from rhyme, what other clever things has the poet done to draw readers into the mystery of the strange sound? (suggested answer: The poet uses rhetorical questions to make the reader think about what the sound could be. They also use an exclamation mark to emphasise the sound of cannons. Also, the poem is in first person which helps readers connect with the speaker in the poem.)
- Can you predict what the sound is, based on the descriptions given in the first 2 stanzas? (you may like to have a guessing competition with a small prize for a student who has the closest answer).

As a class, read the poem from start to finish. This time use page 18 from this issue of Blast Off!

Immediately after reading, before there is any discussion, ask students to write down their immediate reaction when they find out that the sound was the father snoring. Ask them to think about how it made them feel. (for example, some students might think it was very funny, others might feel annoyed that they were tricked).

Discuss the different responses, asking students to elaborate on their thoughts and explain why.

Project the final stanza alone on the board:

'Cause what if it's a dinosaur

that's hollering and roaring?

Oh, wait.

Hold on.

Nope, false alarm.

It's just my father, snoring

Discuss the following:

- What do you notice that is different about this stanza compared with the first two? (suggested answer: the third line is divided into three 'steps' rather than just together on the same line)
- Why do you think the poet decided to do this? (suggested answer: this helps add suspense and show that the speaker in the poem is thinking through and slowly realizing they know they sound).
- Did you guess the sound correctly?
- What were the clues that the sound would be somebody snoring? (suggested answer: All the words in the poem that rhyme, all rhyme with 'snoring.' For example, 'roaring', 'soaring', 'warring.')
- Do you know what it is called when there is a surprise at the end of a poem or story? (suggested answer: a plot twist).
- Why do you think the poem decided to trick readers before revealing a plot twist? (suggested answer: The purpose of the poem is to entertain. When a reader can guess the truth when they are given a mystery in a text, it is not as much fun. Surprising the reader adds a sense of fun.)
- Look back at what you wrote as your personal response immediately after reading the poem. Do you still feel the same way? Have your thoughts on the poem changed? If the illustration, if you had seen this at first, would you have guessed the sound earlier?

Assessment for/as learning:

Ask students to write a review of the poem 'The Terrible, Terrible Noise.' In their review, they are to give an opinion of the poem. It is important that in the review, they do not give away the surprise twist at the end.

Reviews should include:

- A summary of what the poem is about (without telling the ending)
- Details of the fun and interesting techniques used by the poet (including rhyme, rhetorical questions)
- The initial, immediate response felt when reading the poem all the way through for the first time
- Who else might enjoy this poem?
- Why would students recommend this poem to other people?

A New Home

story by Caroline Womack | illustrated by David Legge

EN2-UARL-01 | AC9E4LE02

Learning Intention:

I am learning about plot structure and characterisation so that I can discuss how authors engage their readers in a story.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify significant extracts in a story and discuss their importance to plot and character development
- I can share my response to the story, drawing on my own personal experiences.

Essential knowledge:

You can find a professional learning video for teachers about understanding narrative on the Department of Education website.

There is further information about Character on the English textual concepts website

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Understanding text:

Read the first section of the story, up until 'The hum of the car eventually lulled him to sleep.'

Ask students how the story has made them feel, just from reading the opening. (suggested answer: Many students will say that the story made them feel sad for Jack, because he has had to say goodbye to his Grandma. Some students might suggest that the description of the characters crying made them feel teary too.)

Ask students to choose 1 sentence from the opening section of the story that made them feel that emotion. They can underline it and then compare answers with a partner.

As a class discuss the following question:

- Why is it important for an author to try and get readers to feel different emotions when they are reading?

(Suggested answer: Readers who can connect and feel empathy for the characters are more likely to enjoy a story, and more likely to keep reading. Reading stories helps us to be empathetic to the characters but also other people in real life.)

Continue reading the story until the end of page 27.

Ask students if their emotional response to the story has changed as a result of reading further. (suggested answer: Students might have noticed that at first, they continued to feel sad as the journey away from grandma continued, but as they approached their destination, they started to feel more hopeful that it will work out for Jack).

Ask students to identify a sentence in this section of the story where there was a change in mood or feeling about Jack moving to his new home. They can compare their chosen sentence with a partner.

Suggested answers:

- Maybe this wouldn't be so bad.
- Her voice was as warm and as inviting as a soft cushion
- 'Is he here?' squealed a young girl.

As a class discuss the following question:

- Why is it important for authors to make readers feel more than one emotion in a story? (suggested answer: To keep readers interested, a story should have variety – including in the emotions conveyed in the story.)

Read until the end of the story.

As a class discuss the following question:

- What surprised you about the ending of the story? (suggested answer: it is revealed that Jack is a dog, not a child.)
- Why do you think that the author hid that Jack was a dog from the reader until the very end? (suggested answer: At the beginning when readers think that Jack is a child, saying goodbye to his Grandma, they connect strongly with Jack's character. They might not have felt as strong a connection if we knew it was a dog being rehomed)
- How did you feel at the end of the story? (suggested answer: Students may suggest that they feel happy or relieved that Jack is now with a lovely family to care for him.

- Looking back at the earlier parts of the story, are there any clues that Jack wasn't human? (suggested answer: The only dialogue is from the man, Jack never speaks. In the first sentence, Jack is lying on the back seat of the car – not sitting up in a seatbelt, students might also have noticed the illustration on page 26 showing the man from a low angle.)

Assessment for/as learning:

Ask students to write a paragraph answering the question: What makes a good story? Students are to use 'A New Home' as an example story. Encourage students to use the sentences they underlined during the lesson, or even a different extract from the story to help them show what makes a good story. This can be submitted to teachers at the end of the lesson as an 'exit slip' style response.

For students who require a scaffold, you can provide the following:

What makes a good story?

Introduce features of a good story (think about the discussions you had in class with your teacher about 'A New Home').	A good story includes….
Talk about the story you read in class called 'A New Home.' Explain what makes it a good story.	In class we read 'A New Home' it is a good story because…
Include one of the sentences you underlined as an example.	An example of a sentence showing how the story makes readers feel …… is ….
Complete your paragraph with one final sentence that identifies the features that make a good story.	Good stories need to have….

The Surplus C

poem by Zoë Disher | illustrated by Christopher Nielsen

EN2-VOCAB-01 | AC9E4LA02

Learning Intention:

I am learning about word play so that I can reflect on how word play can be a fun way to express an opinion.

Success Criteria:

- I can understand and enjoy 'word play'
- I can discuss how word play can be used to express an opinion or make a point
- I can use a dictionary and a thesaurus correctly.

Essential knowledge:

More information and professional learning for teachers relating to teacher vocabulary can be found Vocabulary page of the NSW Department of Education's literacy resources website.

Vocabulary

Prior to reading the poem, write the word surplus on the board. Ask students if they know what 'surplus' means. If they do not know, then they can take a guess.

Hand out dictionaries, or ask students to use an online dictionary such as Dictionary.com to find a definition of 'surplus.'

Now that students have looked up a definition of the word surplus, ask them to think about other words or phrases that might mean the same thing. For example: extra, unnecessary, not needed, over-supply.

Distribute thesauruses to the class or use an online thesaurus such as Thesaurus.com to look up other words that mean the same thing as surplus.

Understanding text:

Read the first part of the poem on page 32.

Ask the class to identify the change to the alphabet suggested by the author.

Without reading any further, engage class in a hot seating activity. Choose three volunteers to take on the roles of the letter C, the letter S, and the letter K in the poem.

Ask the rest of the class to prepare questions they might ask each letter (C, S or K) about how that change would affect them and how they would feel about the poet's suggestion of getting rid of the letter C.

Sample questions include:

- Letter C, how do you feel about the poet's suggestion that you are no longer needed?
- Letter S and K, do you feel like you can fill in for the letter C?
- Do you think that there is a different letter that could be removed instead of C?

When the groups have prepared their questions, have the volunteers in role sit at the front of the room, while the groups take turns to ask the questions they have prepared.

Go back to the beginning of the poem, and this time read it all the way through.

Discuss the following questions as a class:

- When does the poet's suggestion of removing the letter C come unstuck? (When the poet writes 'chicken.')
- Which two words does the poet realise needs a C? (chicken and chimpanzee)
- What do the two words from the previous question have in common? (both start with the diagraph 'ch.'
- Can you think of any words starting with 'ch' where the 'ch' sound could be replaced by this poet with an S or a K? (for example, 'character' could be 'karacter.')

Ask students to form pairs, distribute a dictionary to each pair. Ask pairs to look at words listed in the letter C. Pairs are to draw two columns, as below. They are to choose 5 words for the left column which could continue to be used without the letter C, and in the right column they are to write 5 words which require the letter C.

Words that could continue to be used without the letter C	Words that require the letter C
Cat – kat Cow – kow	Chicken chimpanzee

Circle – sirkle	

Assessment for/as learning:

Students work in pairs to write a response to the poet, Zoë Disher. They can choose one of the following options for responding to the poem.

Option 1: Write a letter to Zoë Disher. In your letter you are to give your opinion about the suggestion of removing the letter C from the alphabet. Refer to the list created above to provide evidence to support your opinion.

Option 2: Write a poem in response to 'The Surplus C' in which you argue to keep the letter C. You may like to follow the structure used by Zoë Disher. Students may like to use the scaffold below to get started.

We _____ need the letter C.

It's _____. Wouldn't you agree?

For _____

So let's _____