

The Rock Pool

poem by Peter Skrzynecki | illustrated by [Marjorie Crosby-Fairall](#)

EN3-UARL-01 | AC9E5LE04

Focus question: How does descriptive language contribute to our understanding of textual themes?

Learning Intention:

I am learning about the way that poets use figurative language devices to convey a theme or message so that I can use figurative language in my own poetry.

Success Criteria:

- I can discuss the theme or message conveyed in a poem
- I can connect with the subject matter of a poem
- I can identify and explain key language devices used in a model text
- I can create my own stanza using description language and figurative language

Essential knowledge:

The NSW Department of Education has provided an extensive set of activities about similes and metaphors, which is available as a PDF on the [website](#). The slides provided in the [Week 4 Learning Pack: What is a metaphor?](#) are a useful revision tool.

An introductory lesson for teaching personification can be found on the [NSW Department of Education website](#). The [personification matchup](#) worksheets are a good revision skill.

Oral language and communication:

Prior to reading the poem engage students in a class discussion. Use the following questions:

- What is a rock pool? Where do you find them?
- Have you ever seen a rock pool in real life? If yes, what did you think?
- What is found in a rock pool?

- We are going to read a poem about a rock pool, can you predict what the poem might include?
- Before reading the poem, why do you think the poet might have chosen to write about a rock pool? (What makes rock pools a good subject/topic for a poem?)

Read the poem as a class, or if you have a digital subscription, listen to the recording.

After reading the poem, discuss whether the class had made any correct predictions about the poem prior to reading. Talk about why these predictions had been accurate.

Ask students to think about the theme or message of the poem – what is the poem trying to tell the readers (aside from describing the rock pool)? (This poem is about the wonder of nature and how the life in the rock pool is so vibrant it feels magical. It is about how children in particular are able to enjoy natural wonders like rock pools and treasure the things they find and see in them)

Understanding text:

Students answer the following questions:

- How does the poem draw readers into the world of the rock pool? (The use of direct address [eg. does a somersault over your head' and 'reaches up to your face'] places the reader in the rock pool.)
- Underline the examples of direct address in the poem.
- Identify and circle the metaphor that is used twice in the poem to describe the rock pool. (The rock pool is a magic circle).
- What does this metaphor tell readers about how the poet feels about rock pools? (the poet thinks there is something magical and special about rock pools)
- How does the metaphor help to support the theme or message the poet is sending about rock pools? (The metaphor is used twice to emphasise the magical nature of the rock pool. When comparing the rock pool to magic, it highlights how special and unique a rock pool is, and how children can find joy in the natural world.)
- Locate and highlight an example of personification in the poem. ('Seagrass weaves in slow, soft dances— reaches up to your face and hands.')
- Why does the poet give the seagrass human characteristics and behaviours? (The use of personification brings the poem to life, it draws the reader into the world of the rock pool and makes the seagrass seem more active and alive. The suggestion that the seagrass is dancing helps the reader to imagine the way that the seagrass moves with the movement of the water around it.)
- Another metaphor is used in the final stanza. Find and underline it. ('full of treasures from a sea king's cave – thrown up for the delight of children...')

- How does this final metaphor show that rock pools are valuable natural features in the world? (The poet compares the different creatures plants and non-living items found in the rockpool, with treasure from a mythical sea king's cave. The word 'treasures' to describe the contents of the rock pool shows that the poet thinks that the natural features in the rock pool are important and valuable for children in particular.)

Creating text:

Using the format of the first and final stanzas of the poem 'The Rock Pool,' compose your own stanza showing the magical features of rock pools and the world under water.

Follow the structure below:

The rock pool

Is a magic circle

Full of...

Assessment for/as learning:

Students complete an exit ticket using the following prompt:

- My favourite figurative language device is _____. I like reading or using this technique because_____.

Dolls Around the World

article by Mina | illustrated by [Sylvia Morris](#) | photos by Alamy

EN3-CWT-01 | AC9E5LE05

Learning Intention:

I am learning to extract key information from a non-fiction text so that I can use this information to compose a creative piece of writing.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify key information in a non-fiction text
- I can use an object from the real world as stimulus for creative writing

- I can write a short story using either first or third person narrative and following the structure of a narrative

Essential knowledge:

Further resources for teaching narratives can be found in the [Narrative learning sequence Stage 3](#) resource on the NSW Department of Education website.

Oral language and communication:

Prior to reading the article, ask student to name the different types of dolls they have at home or have seen in real life. Ask a volunteer student to be the scribe on the board. Students are likely to suggest things like cabbage patch dolls, Barbie dolls, rag doll.

Next talk about the dolls on the list and discuss the following:

- Where do these dolls come from? (Most will probably be toys purchased from department stores or toy shops. Some may be traditional dolls from around the world.)
- Are these dolls modern or traditional? (Instead of this question you could ask 'Did any of your Grandparents have dolls like this growing up?')
- Does anyone's family have some special dolls in their house that are not for playing with?
- Does anyone know of any traditional dolls from their own or another cultural background?

Understanding text:

Read the article as a class or listen to the recording if you have a digital subscription.

Discuss the following with the class:

- How many of these dolls had you heard of before?
- Which of the dolls from the article did you learn about for the first time in today's lesson?
- Which doll do you think you would like to have?
- Why do you think so many cultures from around the world have all made dolls?

Ask students to choose one type of doll from the article. Students are to complete the following tasks:

- Choose one doll from the article

- Use a highlighter to highlight the key information about the doll. Remind students that this does not mean highlight the whole paragraph, but just the most important words or phrases.
- Use an atlas or the internet to locate the country of origin of the chosen doll.

Creating text:

Have students plan and compose a short story in which the chosen doll from the previous activity is central to the story. Students can use the following list to help them plan their story:

- Who will be the main character in your story?
- Will the main character be the narrator, or will the story be written in 3rd person narrative style?
- How will the doll be connected to the main character?
- What problem associated with the doll will happen in the story?
- How will the main character solve the problem?
- How will you reveal the information you know about the doll and its origins in your story? (eg. through dialogue or through the character reading about the doll).

Assessment for/as learning:

Organise students into pairs. Each student in the pair should have written about a different doll from the article. Ask students to read their partner's story and then complete the checklist below:

- My partner has written a story using either first or third person narrative style
- My partner's story includes information about the doll, without starting to read like a non-fiction text
- My partner has created a character who is connected with the doll
- My partner's story includes an orientation, complication and resolution

Bradley Takes Off

story by [Bill Condon](#) | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

EN3-UARL-01 | AC9E5LE02

Learning Intention:

I am exploring the features of a narrative and comparing the style and purpose of texts so that I can present an opinion in a written review.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify key features of a narrative including narrator, mood/tone, characterisation and language devices
- I can compare the tone/mood in different texts
- I can form an opinion about a text, and support my opinion with textual evidence
- I can write a review

Essential knowledge:

For more information on the textual concept 'Style' view the [Understanding style video](#).

Understanding text:

Read the story as a class, or if you have a digital subscription, listen to the recording.

Before exploring the text in detail, engage students in a class discussion using the following prompts:

- Who is the narrator? (Bradley D Mented – he is going to use The Slingshot to launch into outer space. He seems to be a TV host)
- Is this a serious or a funny text? How do you know? (It is a humorous text, there are lots of puns and the scenario and characters are ridiculous)
- What exactly is happening, who is the audience within the story? (It is the audio transcript of a live television stunt).
- What did you think about the story? What did you like? What was unusual? What was surprising? Was there anything you didn't enjoy? (Students will offer a range of ideas here – encourage all opinions and thoughts as the lesson is about giving personal

opinions and reviews of texts. Each time a student offers an idea, make sure they also explain why they felt that way).

Look closely at the following extract from page 16.

Let me be clear, when I say Outer Space, I don't mean a little bit out. I mean seriously OUT! Think galaxies, comets, asteroids, meteors, and even bigger stars than me—if that's possible! As you can see, I'm sitting in the rocket right now, with my trusty co-pilot, Lookmum Nohanz, behind me. In just a few moments we'll blast off, but before that, I have online Professor C.R. Ackpot, the genius inventor who has given me the honour of flying his amazing rocket ship, *The Slingshot!*

Ask students to underline the names of the two minor characters. Ask them to discuss the following questions with the person next to them:

- Why have these names been chosen? (These names add comedic value to the text. They engage the reader)
- What is the name of the language technique? (pun)
- How would you describe the mood or feeling of this story? Choose a sentence from this extract as an example. (Dramatic, over the top, jovial)

Compare the character names in the story 'Eione.' Read the opening two paragraphs on page 22. As a class, create a list of character names on the board. (Yia Yia Thalia, Christina, Zach). Explain to the class that Yia Yia means grandmother in Greek. Ask students:

- What kind of mood or tone would you expect from this story, based on the characters introduced in the beginning? (A more serious story, the names chosen show that this story is more likely to be set in the real world – a world more familiar to the class than Bradley's world of pun names and spacecraft made from rubber bands).

Take a look at the following extract taken from the story 'Finding El Dogado' on page 4.

'SEE, FELLOW PIRATES,' woofed the captain. 'We've made it. El Dogado, dead ahead. Now you'll have to believe me.'

All the officers of spaceship Wild Rover were gathered around the captain as he gazed at a huge screen showing a hazy planet, streaked with white and blue. 'Looks like Earth,' muttered First Officer Dasher.'

Ask students to complete a **Think, pair share** activity where they answer the following prompt:

- Explain the difference in tone/mood of the opening of 'Finding El Dogado' compared with the tone/mood of the opening of 'Bradley Takes Off.'

When the class is up to the 'Share' part of the activity challenge them to think about why there is a difference in tone. (Students may suggest that 'Finding El Dogado' has a more serious tone. Some may notice that both texts are to do with space. The reasons behind the difference is related to the audience and purpose of the story. In Bradley takes off, there is a television audience within the story who are looking for entertainment.)

If you have a digital subscription, complete the Fact or Opinion interactive before moving on to the next activity.

Looking at the opening extracts of all three stories from this issue of Orbit, ask students to raise their hand and vote for the one that is most appealing to them, the one that draws their attention the most. You may like to do a 'confidential vote' where you ask the class to put their heads down and then raise their hands when the name of the story is called.

Tally the votes on the board.

Engage students in a class discussion on why different people voted for different stories. Talk about why some aspects of one text will appeal to one person but not another. (This should bring up conversations around personal preferences in literature but also may lead to further discussion about why different people prefer different genres in books or TV, school subjects, sports teams, after school activities etc.)

Creating text:

Have students stand in the centre of the room. Explain that one wall of the classroom is 'yes' the opposite wall is 'no' and the middle section is 'I'm not sure.'

Ask the class the following question:

- Did you like the story 'Bradley Takes Off?'

Once students have moved to the location that represents their answer, ask them to find a partner with the same answer and talk about why. Encourage students to use specific examples and refer to some of the features of the text explored earlier in the lesson.

Ask a new question to the students:

- Did you prefer the style of one of the other stories discussed earlier ('Eione', or 'Finding El Dogado').

Once students have moved to the location that represents their answer, ask them to find a partner with the same answer and talk about why. Encourage students to use specific examples and refer to some of the features of the texts explored earlier in the lesson.

Have students return to their seats. Tell them that they will be giving their opinion of the story 'Bradley takes off' in a book review. In the book review, students are to include:

- A short introduction to the story
- A description of at least two stylistic features
- An opinion about the text (what they liked, what they didn't enjoy)
- A recommendation of who might like this story
- A rating out of 5 stars

Assessment for/as learning:

Have students swap their work with a partner. They are to complete a peer assessment using the checklist below:

- My partner's opinion about the text was clear
- My partner gave reasons to support their opinion
- My partner used evidence from the text
- My partner compared the text with another
- My partner gave a rating out of 5 stars

Sylphie's Squizzes: Peli-can-do!

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

EN3-RECOM-01 | AC9E5LY04

Learning Intention:

I am learning to explain key vocabulary choices and the use of structural features in a text so that I can understand how these work together to convey a theme in a text.

Success Criteria:

- I can use the context of new vocabulary to understand meaning
- I can identify and explain the importance of structural features in a text
- I can work in a group to discuss the key themes in a text
- I can connect the way that different language and structural features of a text work together to convey a theme

Essential knowledge:

View the video [Understanding theme](#) on the NSW Department of Education website.

Vocabulary:

Prior to reading the story, investigate the following words from the article:

Opportunist

Boom

Bust

Read the introductory line of the article in green 'These birds are true opportunists: if they see a chance, they'll snap it up!' Discuss the following questions with the class.

- In this sentence, what does 'opportunist' mean? (Somebody who takes advantage of a good situation)
- Can you think of any other words that are similar? (opportunity)

- How is the word 'opportunist' connected with the word you gave in the previous question?

Write the word 'boom' on the board and ask students to explain what that word could mean.

As a class read the excerpt from the text:

'If there's been a lot of rain, that means a lot of water, which means a lot of fish—good times for pelicans! In 2022, after two very rainy years, a colony of over 30 000 birds nested at the swollen Lake Brewer in inland New South Wales.'

Explain to students that the subheading for the section where this information comes from is called 'Peli-boom.' Ask students to explain what 'boom' might mean in this context?

Show the [Merriam Webster dictionary](#) definition of 'boom and bust.' Ask students if they are able to explain the connection between the pelicans in the extract above and the word 'boom.'

Now that students have seen the definition of 'boom and bust' ask students to predict what the paragraph with the subheading 'Peli-bust' might be about.

Understanding text:

Read the article as a class, or listen to the audio recording if you have a digital subscription.

Compare the final paragraph with the predictions the class made about it based on the heading 'Peli-boom' and the connection with the idea of opportunists, boom and bust. Discuss the ideas given by the class.

Place students into small groups and give each group a large sheet of paper for their work. Complete a [placemat activity](#) where each group member has a section of the page in which they write down their ideas and evidence from the text in answer to the following questions:

- What is the main theme or idea presented in the article 'Peli-Can-Do'?
- What key textual features help convey this theme or message? Give evidence from the text (quotes)

Suggested answers:

- Pelicans are resilient and resourceful bird. They are able to thrive and survive in different weather conditions and locations. When food becomes scarce, they are able to move to a new location and find more.
- Subheadings such as 'Peli-can-do' and 'Peli-boom' suggest that the birds are capable creatures. Puns like 'peli-can-do attitude' and the play on 'boom and bust' also convey the theme. Word choice – such as the use of the word 'opportunist' to describe pelicans.

The initial stage of the activity requires students to think on their own about the given questions and refer to the text independently. Once sufficient time has been given, allow plenty of time for the group to compare their ideas and place common information in the centre of the placemat page.

Bring the groups back together as a whole class. Use the probing questions from the Collaborative for teacher and learning resource [placemat webpage](#).

Assessment for/as learning:

Students complete a self-reflection using dice. Simply use dice from the classroom, or an online dice such as [roll-a-dice](#) from Online Stopwatch. Students roll the dice and answer the question associated with the number they have rolled as follows:

1. What was one thing you learnt from this lesson?
2. Why are subheadings important in an article like 'Peli-can-do'?
3. What can people learn from pelicans by observing their 'can-do' resilient attitude?
4. When have you been an 'opportunist' in your life?
5. Identify and explain one language feature and how it conveys the theme
6. What does 'boom and bust' mean? Can you apply this term to something other than pelicans?

My Unpredictable World

poem by B J Lee | illustrated [Ana Maria Méndez Salgado](#)

[EN3-CWT-01](#) | [AC9E5LY06](#)

Learning Intention:

I can respond to a scenario presented in a model text and use planning tools so that I can compose a persuasive piece of writing.

Success Criteria:

- I can use an online tool to plan the structure and content of my writing
- I can think creatively
- I can use persuasive techniques to convince readers of my point of view
- I can reflect on my writing

Understanding text:

Prior to reading the poem, ask students to imagine they could make an unexpected change to the way the world works. Discuss the different ideas that students contribute and talk about why that would be interesting or strange.

Read the poem as a class, or listen to the recording if you have a digital subscription.

Ask students to colour code the unexpected scenarios in the poem – they are to use two colours. The first colour is to highlight or underline the changes that would be highly disruptive, The second colour is to highlight the changes that would not have a huge impact.

Engage students in a class discussion using the following questions:

- Which scenario would be terrible if it came true in real life? Why?
- Which scenario wouldn't change the world very much? Why?
- Which scenario is the funniest? Why?
- Which scenario is the most concerning? Why?

Creating text:

Students are to select one scenario from the poem 'My Unpredictable World' (for example 'the rain falls up') and prepare a persuasive response in which you explain why the world would be better if that scenario played out in real life.

In order to plan their work students may use the [Persuasion Map Tool](#) from the 'Read Write Think' website.

When students have finished their response using the persuasion map tool they are to save and print their work so that they can use their plan to write their final response.

If you have a digital subscription, have students complete the interactive on 'Modality' before they write their response.

Assessment for/as learning:

Students complete a self-assessment in which they answer the following questions:

- My writing argues that the scenario from the poem is beneficial
- I have given examples
- I have explained my reasoning
- I have used persuasive language/high modality language

Eione

story by Claire Catacouzinos illustrated by Caitlin O'Dwyer

[EN3-OLC-01](#) | [AC9E5LY07](#)

Learning Intention:

I am learning to work with small and large groups to break down and analyse a narrative so that I can plan and present my own independent verbal explanation and analysis of the narrative.

Success Criteria:

- I am learning to engage in whole class discussions

- I am learning to discuss key features in a text as part of a pair
- I can identify and explain the theme of a narrative
- I can connect my own life experiences with that of the character in a text
- I can plan and deliver a short presentation

Essential knowledge:

View the video [Understanding theme](#) on the NSW Department of Education website.

Oral language and communication:

Prior to reading the story, engage students in a class discussion. Assign one student to be the note-taker and record the ideas that are offered by their classmates.

Before beginning the discussion, set up the group protocols for a group discussion including establishing how students can raise their hand to contribute, wait to be called upon and not interrupt or call out. Discuss what active listening looks like

When the class is ready, use the discussion prompts:

- What is a family?
- Can there be other definitions or different versions of families?
- Why is family important?
- Who are ancestors?
- Why is knowing about your own ancestors considered important by some people?
- What does heritage mean in relation to families?
- What might happen if people do not have access to knowledge about their own family heritage or their ancestors?

As a class, read the story or listen to the audio recording if you have a digital subscription. Stop reading at 'Hurry up!' Zach yelled impatiently, freestyling after them.' On page 23.

Before reading on, ask students to turn to the person next to them (a partner) and talk about Christina's family. What do we know about the family at this stage of the story? (Students might notice that the word Yiayia is used for Christina's grandmother. They might notice that

Christina's older sibling and cousins are impatient with her. Students might also identify a family heirloom. – the necklace)

Continue reading the story, stop reading at 'Yet Christina's family and the Greek community up on the pier didn't scream in fear, they all whooped in roaring delight.'

Before reading on, ask students to turn back to their partner and discuss the following:

- What is a nereid and a hippocamp? (these are beings from Greek mythology)
- What does this inclusion of mythical beings from Greek mythology suggest about Christina and her heritage? (This suggests that Christina's family has Greek heritage, and might even have connections with Eione's family of Nereids.)
- Why is Christina's family the only group of people who are thrilled to see Eione and the hippocamp? (Christina's family must recognise the nereids and the hippocamp from their own family stories. They are not frightened because it is familiar to them.)
- Why do you think that Eione and Christina both have the same necklace? (they are possibly distant relations)

Continue reading as a class, until the end of the story. As a group, look at the extract below:

Christina helped her Yiayia down from the rail. Zach grabbed Yiayia's arm too. 'I'm so glad Eione appeared,' Yiayia said, clasping her hands to her mouth. 'It's been a long time. Too long. I thought they had forgotten us ...' She looked so pensive. 'Maybe we forgot about them ... our heritage ... but this ...' She reached out and touched the coin pendant around Christina's neck. 'This is how we remember them.' Christina hugged her Yiayia, and so did Zach. And the whole family swooped in and group-hugged Yiayia too. Amongst the squished bodies, Zach caught Christina's eye and he half smiled. 'Sorry about before, Chrissy.' He looked thoughtful.

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- What does Yiayia's dialogue reveal about the message or theme of the story? (this story is about the importance of family and heritage – not forgetting those who came before you.)
- How can we apply this in our own life? (We can become interested and curious and ask questions about our own heritage. You can learn about different cultural experiences of family members belonging to an older generation).
- How does Zach speak to Christina at the end of the story, compared with their interactions in the beginning? Has he learnt from the experience? (Zach is more respectful and connected with his sister.)

Creating text:

Have students conduct research on the nereids and/or hippocamps from Greek mythology.

Once students have gathered information about the nereids/hippocamps, they are to plan and prepare to present a short speech in which they answer the following question.

- Why are the nereids/hippocamps a good feature to include in the story 'Eione' to help convey the key theme or message of the story?

Students may like to prepare some slides with images to accompany their presentation.

Suggested structure:

- A brief introduction to the story and the theme or message of the story
- An explanation of the beings from Greek mythology included in the story
- An explanation of why the author has chosen the Nereids and Hippocamps to help convey the theme of families and family heritage
- An analysis of why the use of Greek mythological beings is an effective way of conveying the message about the importance of family heritage,

Assessment for/as learning:

Reflect on the lesson by answering the following questions:

- What do you like about talking with your classmates about a story and the themes presented in them?
- What do you dislike about talking with your classmates as a learning strategy?
- Do you prefer to write down your ideas or discuss them? Why?

Escape

poem by Desna Wallace illustrated by Lesley McGee

EN3-CWT-01 | AC9E5LE05

Learning Intention:

I am learning to create a visual representation based on a written text and create a written text based on a visual representation so that I can experiment with ideas and a range of text types.

Success Criteria:

- I can create a visual representation based on a poem
- I can discuss my visual representation with a peer
- I can use a visual representation as stimulus for narrative writing
- I can develop characterisation, descriptive language and a message for readers in my story

Essential knowledge:

Information about Cicadas can be found on the [Australian Museum website](#).

Understanding text:

Prior to reading the poem, ask students what they already know about Cicadas. Tell them that they will be reading a poem about cicadas – ask them to write down a prediction of what the poem might include, based on their knowledge of the subject. If students need further information about cicadas, they can visit the Australian Museum website, link in 'Essential knowledge,' above.

Have students represent the story told in the poem as a 4 or 8 square storyboard. Use the template from the [Digital Learning Selector](#). Ask students not to use words or captions in their storyboard, they are to represent the poem in pictures.

Encourage students to use a range of viewing angles (sometimes a close up, sometimes showing the action from a distance. To teach students the difference between different

viewing angles, look at the following examples from this issue of orbit – discuss the angle of each one and when they are useful in a storyboard.

- The illustration for 'Finding El Dogado' on page 6. (This is an establishing shot, or extreme long shot. Taken from a distance to set the scene, useful at the beginning of a new scene to orient the reader/viewer)
- The illustration for 'Escape' on page 28. (This is a mid-shot – showing the boy from the waist up. This is useful for showing both facial expressions but also body language)
- The illustration for 'Eione' on page 22. (This is an extreme close up, zooming in on a key details)
- The illustration for 'Eione' on page 24. (this is a close up, useful for showing facial expressions or key details)
- The illustration for 'Eione' on page 26. (This is a long shot, useful for showing characters within a scene).

Creating text:

Students swap their storyboard with a partner. Students look at their partner's storyboard in comparison with their own and discuss:

- What is similar and what is different?
- Why are there similarities and differences?
- Where have you each chosen to use close ups, long shots or other angles in your storyboard? Why?

Students now take their partner's storyboard and in their own workbook, write a short story (not a poem) based on the storyboard. They are to follow the sequence in the storyboard, but think about adding details such as characterisation, descriptive language and a message for the reader.

When students have finished their stories, they can give their partner's storyboard back and then share their story with their partner.

Assessment for/as learning:

Students engage in a peer marking activity in which they offer feedback on the short story using the 'Two stars and a wish' method. Use the [Peer Feedback](#) document from the Department of Education website.

Mermaid Wishes

poem by Elenore Byrne | illustrated by Dante Hookey

EN3-UARL-01 | AC9E5LE01

Learning Intention:

I am learning to identify the techniques used to convey ideas in poetry so that I can make connections between the texts I read and the world around me.

Success Criteria:

- I can identify common ideas relating to nature in poetry
- I can analyse the impact of different poetic devices
- I can compare poems written by different poets and make connections between them

Essential knowledge:

View the [Connotation, imagery and symbol](#) video, starting from 1:53 for an introduction to imagery.

Understanding text:

Ask students to form pairs and answer the following questions.

- According to the speaker in the poem, who sent the 'waves that flow in with the tide?' (Mermaids)
- According to the speaker in the poem, what does a surfer need to do to get some 'sea swelling rollers to catch?' (Whisper a wish)
- Is this a poem about mermaids, or is this a poem about something else? What natural occurrence is this poem describing? (The poem is about the tides – high and low tide)
- How does the speaker in the poem explain low tide in the middle of the day?
- Why do you think that the poet is describing the tides as though they are created by mermaids? (Connecting tides with mermaids gives nature a sense of mythology and readers a feeling of wonder when they think about the natural world around them)

View the video [Understanding theme](#) on the NSW Department of Education website.

Discuss as a class:

- What is the topic of the poem 'Mermaid Wishes?' (The tide, mermaids)
- What is the theme of the poem 'Mermaid Wishes?' (The wonder of nature and the natural world. The natural world is so amazing that it seems almost mythical or fantastical)

Assign pairs either the poem 'Escape' on page 28 or the poem 'The Rock Pool' on pages 10-11 of this issue of The School Magazine.

After reading their assigned poem, pairs work together to complete the following table:

	Mermaid wishes	Other poem
Topic		
Theme		
Poetic techniques with an example for each		
Common messages or ideas		

Assessment for/as learning:

Pairs answer these questions, in order to do so they should refer to the information in the table they have just completed.

- Why are there so many poems written about the natural world?
- Is there an aspect of the natural world that you feel strongly connected to?
- If you were writing about your chosen feature of the natural world from the previous question, what message would you like to send to the reader of your poem?