

## Vocabulary Overview

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The vocabulary criterion examines students' use of language.

Emergent writers may only use drawing and symbols as their language to convey meaning, or a few simple content words or word groups.

Examples of more developed vocabulary:

- Attitudinal, technical, formal, colloquial and evaluative language appropriate to the genre and purpose
- Precise single words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and/or word groups (adverbial and adjectival groups)
- Similes
- Metaphors
- Alliteration
- Personification

### Supporting students with special educational needs

Vocabulary is profoundly important to understanding the message in what is said, written and read (comprehension). Students with limited or inefficient vocabulary knowledge will have greater difficulty combining concepts and expressing them. Difficulties increase as the intensity and frequency of content words increases. Limited vocabulary can also affect students' lexical decision speed and accuracy. (Fawcett and Nicolson 1991).

The building of content and grammatical vocabulary within the context of students' learning – in particular for those with special educational needs – helps them to write and understand more elaborate content and grammatical word classes.

Students with special educational needs can have greater challenges with both:

1. **Receptive vocabulary** – the meaning of words that a person understands.  
Given a word and several meanings, students can match the correct meaning to the word; or can tell what a word means
2. **Expressive vocabulary** – the words a person can produce to match a meaning.

# Skill Focus: Developing descriptive language

## STAGES 1–2

### Strategy

Using barrier games to learn to communicate descriptive information effectively

### Activities to support the strategy

In barrier games, students have to communicate information. Information is hidden from one student and they must convey the information to another student. Explain to students that descriptions elaborate characteristics and occur in many different types of texts.

The nature of each description depends on the purpose of the text.

### Modelled

The teacher has a drawing of an imaginary creature.

The teacher describes this picture to the class. As the picture is described the class draw the creature without seeing it. The teacher writes these categories on the board:

- Body
- Head
- Parts of the head
- Body parts
- Texture, skin covering
- Mood

Then students label the parts on their illustration.

Students then compare and contrast their drawings with each other.

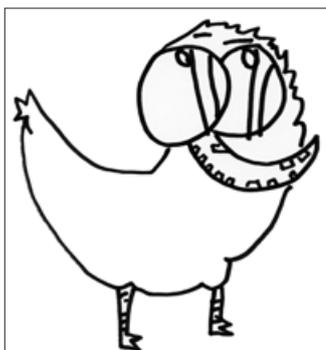
The teacher guides a class discussion on the reasons why some parts were easy to draw and others difficult in relation to the way they were described. Solutions to make the drawing easier (i.e. clearer descriptions) are discussed and added to the categories on the whiteboard.

### Guided

#### Exploring substantive communication (QTF)

##### Activity one

A small number of volunteer students are asked to draw the imaginary creature on the white board as the class describes the unseen picture to them. The teacher guides students to use the descriptor categories written on the board.



### K–6 Outcomes

WS1.9: Writes elementary texts and elementary descriptions of familiar people and places

WS2.9: Writes a wider range of texts and fuller descriptions of people, places, animals and objects

### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



### Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices.

### Statements of Learning for English (p.18)

When students write stories, they have the opportunity to include brief descriptions of familiar characters, places and things.

After they have drawn their creatures they compare their interpretation with the original picture.

## Activity two

The teacher provides a picture of an imaginary creature, which is half completed. The students complete the drawing, using line and colour to develop texture for their creature.

As they draw their creature, encourage discussion about the body parts using detailed and specific nouns and noun groups. Record some of these words on the board.



## Independent

### Exploring substantive communication (QTF)

The teacher collects a number of pictures to use for this activity. They can be based on a particular topic, include pictures of imaginary creatures, or be objects or everyday items. The use of imaginary creatures is preferable for beginning stages as it reduces the likelihood of students calling out the name of the object.

Students are grouped in pairs and work with their partner. In this barrier game, the first student hides the picture that they have been given and describes it to the second student. The second student draws the picture as it is described.

Students compare their pictures then write a description of their creatures.

# Skill Focus: Building description

## STAGES 1–2

### Strategies

Using categories to develop descriptions

Analysing objects and characters from familiar texts

### Activities to support the strategies

### Modelled

#### Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Provide categories for ideas about a character:

Appearance	
Feelings	
Personality	

The teacher models a description of a character from a shared story using the categories in the table.

### Guided

(The following descriptor list was referenced from *Text types Intensive English: Working with Text types at Levels 2 and 3 to High school* DET Multi Cultural Programs Unit, 2007)

[http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/multicultural/resources/index.htm#ESL\\_education](http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/multicultural/resources/index.htm#ESL_education)

Object description categories:

- number
- size
- shape
- colour
- name of object
- texture

### K–6 Outcomes

WS1.9: Writes elementary literary texts and elementary descriptions of familiar people and places

WS2.9: Writes fuller descriptions of people, places animals and things

WS3.1.3: Discusses how language choices engage the reader

### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 3  
Vocabulary



### Item Descriptor

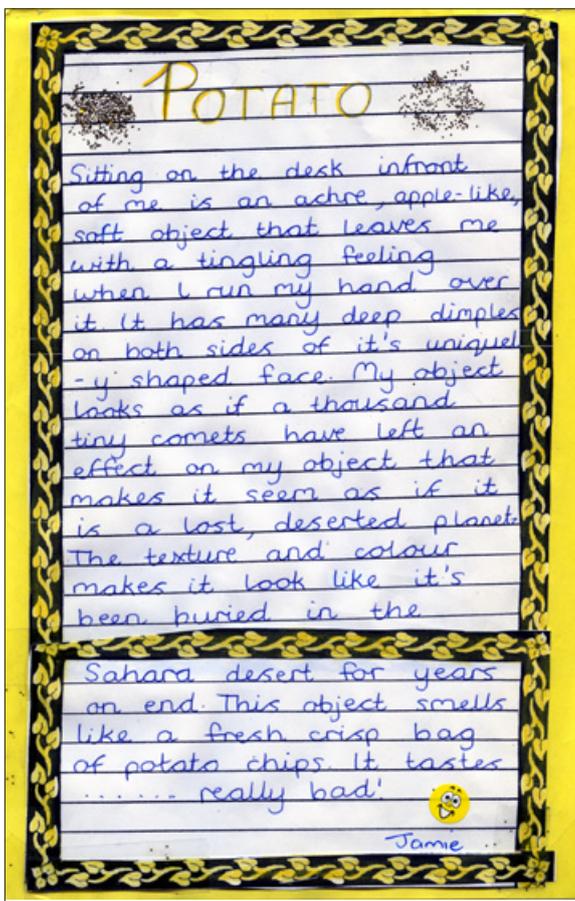
The creation, selection and crafting of ideas for a narrative

### Statements of Learning for English

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to clarify meaning.

Provide three objects for the students to view. Using the list above, describe one of the items. The students write down the object that they are describing and record the descriptors that they have used.

Students analyse a passage on the description of a potato on an OHT, thinking about the inclusion of the elements that are described such as physical appearance, texture and smell.



Note: the sample includes mistakes

As a class joint construction, students use the categories provided (or similar) to describe an object such as a feather, a piece of fruit or an unusual unknown object such as a tool or computer part.

### Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Playing 'twenty questions'

As a finisher, students are asked to write at least three questions about a hidden object using the matrix as a guide.

Students write at least three questions asking about the object, using the correct punctuation such as:

What colour is it?

What material is it made out of?

What sound does it make?

What is its purpose?

Who would use the object?

Where could we find the object?

Students then put their questions in their pocket. In a circle on the floor, students take turns at asking their question to the ring master (the ring master is the only one who knows the object).

A student tallies the number of questions being asked. After twenty questions the class can guess what the object is hidden under the bag (briefcase, hat, box etc.).

## Independent

Students illustrate a character or object from a chosen book. They label the character or object and then write a description.



# Skill Focus: Developing word banks

## STAGE 2 Supporting ESL Students

### Strategy

Using word banks to build description using noun groups and adjectival phrases

### Activities to support the strategy

#### Modelled

#### Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

The teacher displays a variety of pictures depicting dragons. Students brainstorm descriptive words and phrases to describe the creatures.

#### Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

The teacher records the discussion using the following proforma on the board. As the students provide the words, the teacher writes and categorises them into the following elements:

Adjective	Noun	Groups of describing words
sharp	teeth	extremely sharp, large teeth
golden	scales	particularly troublesome
smoke	rings	fire-breathing breath
ruby red	eyes	huge balls of fire
piercing	appetites	monstrous, scaly head
huge	roar	large, snake-like eyes
clashing	body	long threads of sticky green saliva
pointy	ears	
shiny		short, stumpy wings

#### Guided

#### Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Students are given a line drawing of a dragon. They label it using the descriptive words and phrases provided. For additional support, partial labelling may assist, e.g. \_\_\_\_\_, sharp teeth.

### ESL Scales

- 3.11.12: Selects suitable descriptive words to enhance effectiveness of writing
- 4.3.8: Employs a small range of vocabulary to describe shades of meaning
- 4.10.6: Creates mood and feeling by use of appropriate words
- 5.10.6: Uses fitting detail in description

### Question & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



### Item Descriptor

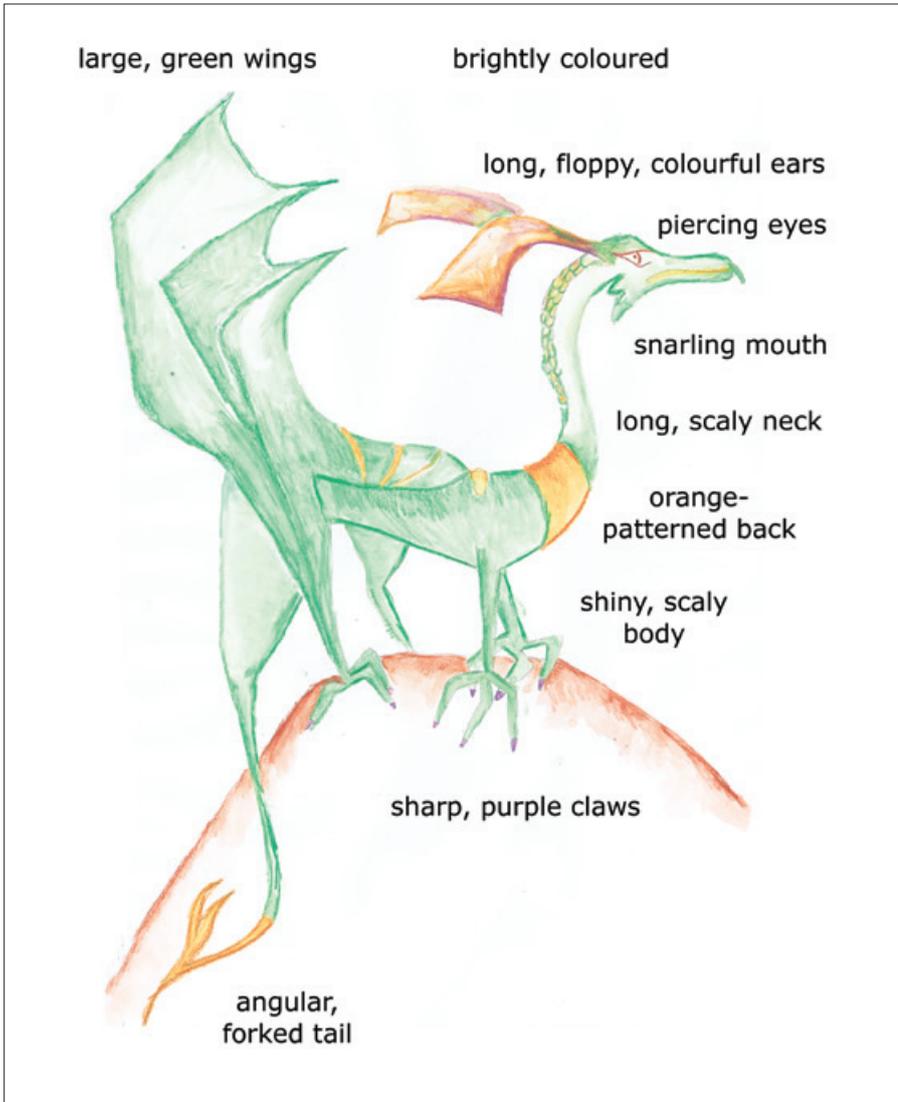
Students develop a range and precision of language choices

### Statements of Learning for English (p. 18)

When students write stories, they have the opportunity to include brief descriptions of familiar characters, places and things.

Discuss what a dragon's body looks like, feels like, smells like (senses description) and then what materials students could use to create these effects when drawing their own dragon.

The teacher creates a word bank of these descriptive words and phrases (see example).



Students draw their own dragon using colour, textures (from texture rubbings) and different media (crayon, paint, paper, ink).

# Skill Focus: Developing imagery in description

## STAGE 2

### Strategy

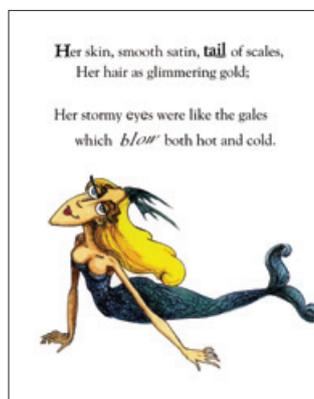
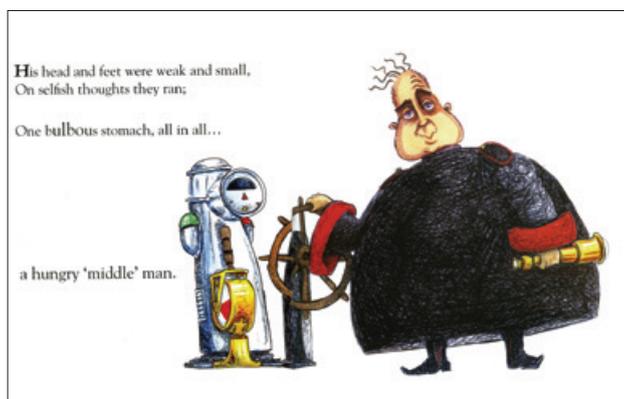
Using comparisons (similes) to build images

### Activities to support the strategy

Exploring the way writers and illustrators have described characters in narratives provides students with models of how to describe characters in their own writing. Choose books that explore these aspects both visually and in words.

Examples of texts to deconstruct are:

*The Crime of the Agent Mariner*, by Pia Santaklaus.



*The Gizmo* by Paul Jennings explores the characters of two boys with opposing values and personas. The illustrations add to the character profiles.

### Modelled

#### Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Collect pictures of the characters and separate the images and the text describing the characters.

Enlarge several images for demonstration. Model how to describe and talk about the characters, noting how the comparisons build images.

### Guided

Involve students in matching the description of the characters to their images. After matching the descriptions and comparing the character representations introduce the word 'like'.

*I noticed that you were using the word 'like' in your descriptions when you were comparing your characters.*

Discuss how characters' physical and emotional descriptions can be *like* other things. Give examples of similes in each category below and ask students to provide other examples:

- How it feels compared to how something else feels

### K-6 Outcome

WS2.9: Writes a wider range of texts and fuller descriptions of people, places, animals and objects

### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



### Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices

### Statements of Learning for English (p. 18)

When students write stories they have the opportunity to include brief descriptions of familiar characters, places and things.

Students have the opportunity to understand that stories have purposes to entertain or inform an audience.

*His skin was as slippery as plastic.*  
*Her skin was like satin.*

- How it looks compared to how something else looks

*His hair was as spiky as toothbrush bristles.*  
*His hands were wrinkled like prunes.*

- How it smells compared to how something else smells

*The air was as spicy as pepper.*  
*The room smelt like rotting fruit.*

- How a character behaves compared with something else

*He ran like a cheetah through the school gate.*

Complete some similes on the white board together.

As sly as a _____
As slippery as a _____
As sneaky as a _____
As quiet as a _____
As brave as a _____

## Independent

### Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Students research similes online to build their repertoire. Students can build a data bank of similes by adding their favourite simile from the different websites to a class simile list.

Students choose a character from the texts that have been deconstructed and describe them using at least three similes.

Alternatively, small groups can take a character and write a number of similes on large sheets of butcher's paper or flashcard strips. These can be shared with peers in a writers' circle and displayed in the classroom.

# Skill Focus: Developing descriptive language (adverbs and adverbial phrases) STAGE 2–3

## Strategy

Using adverbs and adverbial phrases to create more effective descriptions

## Activities to support the strategy

### Modelled

Details about the action in a story are provided by adverbs and adverbial phrases that tell more about **how** and **where** action takes place. Provide students with text from a suitable reader. As a class, identify the verbs and adverbs in the sentences. Discuss how the adverbs provide more information for the reader about the action taking place.

Provide students with simple sentences, e.g.

*He opened the door.*

*My brother and I hid.*

*I rushed.*

Ask: What words or phrases could we add that tell more about **how**?

*He opened the door **quietly**.*

*My brother and I hid **nervously**.*

*I rushed **frantically**.*

Ask: What phrases could we add that tell about **where** the action occurs?

*He opened the door **of the study** quietly.*

*My brother and I hid nervously **under our beds**.*

*I rushed frantically **out onto the verandah**.*

### Guided

Divide students into pairs to complete the following task. Get students to create 3 effective sentences that use adverbs. They swap the sentence with their partner who then has to identify and underline the adverbs in the sentences.

## K–6 Outcomes

WS2.10: Identifies nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in own writing and how these add to the meaning of the text.

WS3.10: Uses different types of verbs, eg action, thinking, seeing, feeling, relating.

## Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



Language Conventions

Year 3 Q: 31 and 42

Year 5 Q: 26, 40 and 45

Year 7 Q: 33 and 55

Year 9 Q: 35 and 42

## Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices.

### Statements of Learning for English (p. 18)

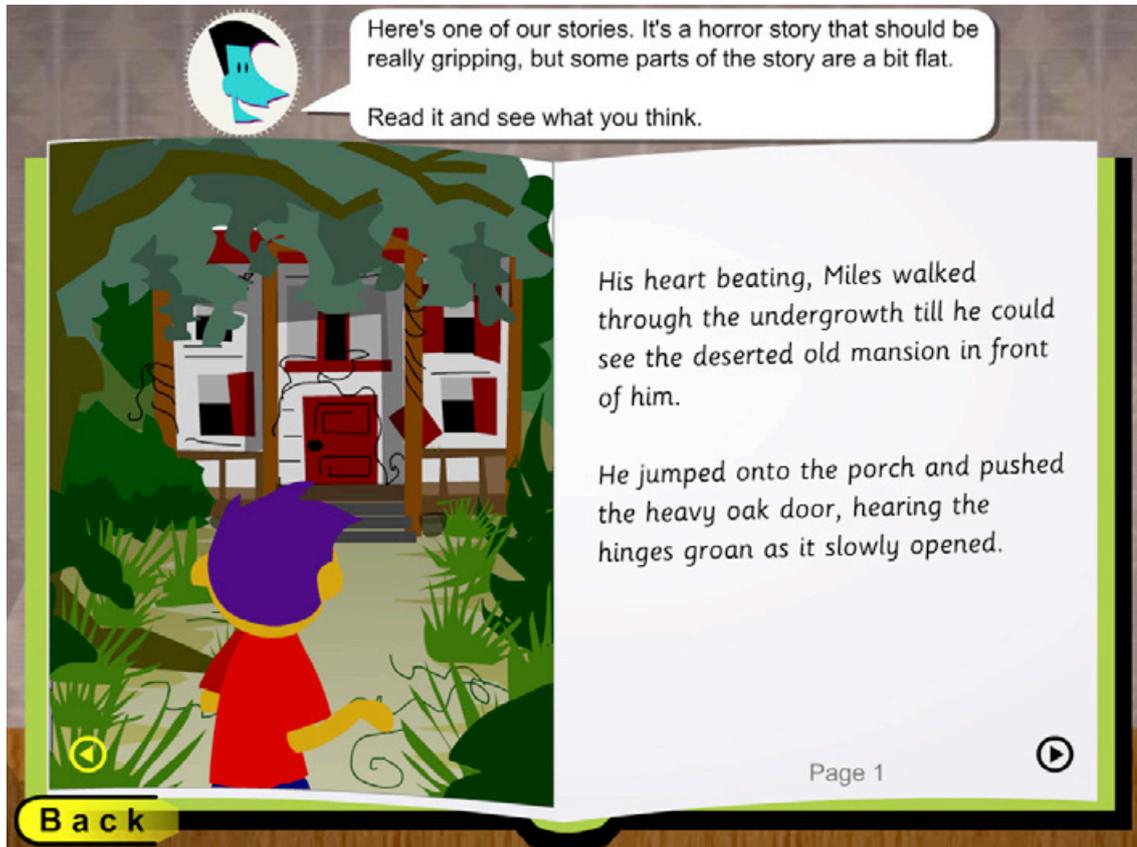
Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases to elaborate ideas.

## Independent

### Activity one

Click on the link below to view the *Super Stories* learning object. This multimedia resource focuses specifically on using effective verbs and adverbs. Students are required to assume the role of editor at *Super Stories Incorporated*. They must read a first draft of a horror story and then select more effective verbs and adverbs to make the text more engaging.

<http://tlf.dlr.det.nsw.edu.au/learningobjects/Content/L6185/object/index.html>



The screenshot shows a digital interface for a learning object. At the top left, a character icon with a speech bubble says: "Here's one of our stories. It's a horror story that should be really gripping, but some parts of the story are a bit flat. Read it and see what you think." Below this is a large illustration of a character with purple hair and a red shirt walking through a dense forest towards a large, red-roofed mansion. To the right of the illustration is a text box containing the following text:

His heart beating, Miles walked through the undergrowth till he could see the deserted old mansion in front of him.

He jumped onto the porch and pushed the heavy oak door, hearing the hinges groan as it slowly opened.

At the bottom of the text box, it says "Page 1". There are navigation buttons: a "Back" button on the bottom left and a play button on the bottom right.

### Super Stories: The Abandoned House

Learning objects provide opportunities for multimodal learning and are specifically designed to engage and motivate students. The Learning Federation (TLF) have developed over 2000 learning objects and 3500 digital resources which are now freely available to NSW government teachers through the TaLe portal.

### Activity two

Changing verbs and adverbs can also change character traits which in turn will impact on the manner in which a character reacts to the action of a narrative.

Cautiously, I pushed against the massive iron gate. It was firmly locked. Trembling with fear, I realised that nobody was coming to pick me up. Too embarrassed to knock or draw attention to myself, I walked out tentatively into the Shanghai streets. Surely if I tried hard enough, I would remember the way home.

Engage students in identifying verbs/verb groups, adverbs, adverbial phrases/clauses, and have them suggest words to substitute for some of the verbs and adverbials, which would change the narrator's character and hence the manner in which she would react to the situation.

Boldly, I pushed against the massive iron gate. It was firmly locked. Tingling with excitement, I realised that nobody was coming to pick me up. Confidently I walked out into the Shanghai streets. With a sense of excitement, I decided I would make my own way home.

Students independently rework the complication of a personal narrative to change the main character's personality (as above) which will, in turn, change the story line of that narrative. The resulting changes may be presented in a 'choose your own character type' narrative format.

## ADVERBIAL PHRASES

### Guided

Jointly revise what noun/noun groups, verb/verb groups and adverbial phrases are and identify examples of each in a familiar text.

In pairs match some adverbial phrases to sentence beginnings and do simple illustrations for each. For example:

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| The car came to a standstill | with the gusts of wind.    |
| The cat licked its paw       | just beyond the stop sign. |
| The sail billowed            | day and night.             |
| The baby stood               | with the chicks.           |
| The male waits               | to see over the boxes.     |
| The boy sits                 | on top of the ladder.      |
| The girl stands              | in front of the gate.      |



The boy sits on top of the ladder



The girl stands in front of the gate

Jointly discuss which question each adverbial phrase answers: Where? When? Why? How? With whom?

Record adverbial phrases on the following chart and, as a class, brainstorm more adverbial phrases.

Where?	When?	Why?	How?	With whom?
...just beyond the stop sign.	...day and night.			

[view and print](#)

Discuss the two types of adverbial phrases – those beginning with a preposition and those using the infinitive. Underline the prepositions in the phrases listed.

In pairs, use a text written previously and extend the description by adding adverbial phrases. Rewrite the text as a cloze passage with the prepositions at the beginning of adverbial phrases missing. Swap with another pair and fill the gaps.

Jointly write five possible adverbial phrases for a simple sentence, (one for each question). For example:

- The lady walked to work – past the shop (where?)
- early in the morning (when?)
  - to save petrol (why?)
  - as quickly as she could (how?)
  - with her neighbour (with whom?)

## Independent

### Activity one

In small groups, prepare sentences for a game. Each sentence must include an adverbial phrase and each group must compose at least one sentence for each question (Where? When? Why? How? With whom?) Play class game:

- groups take turns to read a sentence and other groups try to identify and write down the adverbial phrase and which question it answers. Each correct response scores a point. The team with the most points wins.

### Activity two

In small groups, develop a ‘choose your own story’ for others by first writing several simple sentences for a story. Record these down the left side of a page and then write four or five adverbial phrases as choices on the right side answering each of the questions. For example:

A dog ran	down the road. to get away from a boy. with a boy. in a zigzag pattern. after the gun went off.	(where?) (why?) (with whom?) (how?) (when?)
It stopped	near a tree. to rest. with the boy. in an instant. after a few minutes.	(where?) (why?) (with whom?) (how?) (when?)
Then the dog lay down	on the grass. with its legs straight. later on. to recover from running.	(where?) (how?) (when?) (why?)
It went home	up the hill. in the evening. to see its owner. dragging one leg. all by itself.	(where?) (when?) (why?) (how?) (with whom?)

When satisfied that each option works well swap the 'choose a story' with another group to read, then swap again. For example:

- Discuss how the adverbial phrases added a lot more detail to an otherwise very simple story.
- Also look at how more than one adverbial phrase can be added to give even more information, e.g. The dog ran down the road in a zigzag pattern after the gun went off.
- Have a competition for pairs to write the longest/most detailed sentence by using adverbial phrases. Give a simple sentence to begin with.

### Activity three

Jointly edit an information report written previously. Add more detail by including adverbial phrases, identifying which question each one answers.

- In pairs, continue to add information including detail (adverbial phrases).
- Use the information to independently write a report including adverbial phrases to give greater detail.

## Skill Focus: Developing descriptive language

### STAGE 3

#### Strategy

Creating and labelling pictures to develop the capacity to describe

#### Guided

##### Exploring metalanguage in the words and images (QTF)

After students are familiar with *The Lost Thing* by Shaun Tan discuss the way the artist has used text in the book by examining the background collage on each page, text used in the drawings and the way the narrative text is placed throughout the book.

See reviews on the internet [www.beps.vic.edu.au/images/thelostthing.pdf](http://www.beps.vic.edu.au/images/thelostthing.pdf) to assist with analysis.

#### Independent

##### Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Give students paper and a black felt-tip pen and ask them to draw their own *lost thing*.

Students might decide to draw and embellish an everyday object such as a lunchbox, or a lonely fantasy creature that doesn't belong to anybody. Instruct students to cut out their drawing.

Ask students to use magazines to locate a picture of an environment on which to place their lost thing drawing. Encourage students to experiment with placing their drawing over various magazine images before they select one of the images to paste their drawing onto to make a collage.

#### Guided

Instruct students to use their art journals to construct a list of words to describe the location of the lost thing. Encourage the use of a thesaurus. ([www.thesaurus.reference.com](http://www.thesaurus.reference.com))

##### Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Ask students to record words which describe the appearance, position, mood or behaviour of various parts of the image provided. Using the words recorded in their art journals, students write sentences to further embellish their ideas (as noted in their journals) about location (settings). The words could be considered as clues to the whereabouts of their lost thing. Encourage the students to use the thesaurus for effective describing words.

#### Independent

Ask students to use word processing software to type and print each of the words on their list. Have students cut around each of the words, and paste them onto the appropriate sections of their artwork. Encourage students to experiment with how the text label is placed in the image so that it complements the lines in the image.

#### K-6 Outcomes

English WS3.13: Discusses how language choices engage the reader

Visual Arts S2.1: Represents the qualities of experiences and things that are interesting or beautiful by choosing among aspects of subject matter

#### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



#### Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices

#### Statements of Learning for English (p. 22)

When students write imaginative texts, they have the opportunity to provide a description of a setting and characters.

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use adjectives, verbs and visual techniques to represent people, places, events and things in a chosen way.

#### Other links

[www.beps.vic.edu.au/images/thelostthing.pdf](http://www.beps.vic.edu.au/images/thelostthing.pdf)

<http://thesaurus.reference.com>

Ask each student to swap their artwork with another student and to construct a descriptive text using the information presented in the artwork.

The creature stood on the red dusty road on top of the world.

It had a belt around the middle with buttons — you could only imagine what they might do.

It had 4 strange legs, two in the front and two behind.

The creature's dark shadow seemed to have a life of its own. It followed it everywhere.



# Skill Focus: Developing descriptive language

## STAGES 3–4

### Strategy

Deconstructing imagery in texts

Successful writers craft descriptions using a variety of techniques. Imagery is an essential component of effective writing as it assists readers to imagine what is in the writer's mind. Imagery is most effective when intensity or polarisation of images is described.

### Activities to support the strategy

#### Modelled

#### Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

#### How to spot a simile in texts

A simile is when one object is compared to another. Similes are used to describe feelings and settings to create a better mental picture of what is happening for the reader.

Similes are usually identified by phrases using:

- like
- as if
- similar
- looked as if
- looked like
- sounds like
- feels like
- acts like

A simile uses *like* or *as* in its construction to compare two things

Model for students how to create similes by first saying what something else is like:

- *hair like rats' tails*
- *lightning like whips*
- *skin like bubble wrap*
- *hail like jagged rocks*
- *road like black ribbon*
- *thunder like a beating drum*

Then show students how to use the information in a different form:

- *rat's tail hair*
- *whips of lightning*
- *bubble wrap skin*
- *jagged rocks of hail*
- *black ribbon of the road*
- *the drum beat of thunder*

### K–6 Outcomes

WS2.9: Writes a wider range of texts and fuller descriptions of people, places, animals and objects

WS3.13: Discusses how metaphor, idiom and personification enhance own text.

### KLA Outcomes

Design and Technology 4.6.3: Uses a range of technologies appropriately and safely in the development of quality design solutions

English 4.2.13: Students learn about alternative ways of expressing ideas

English 4.6.11: Students learn about verbal, aural and visual techniques used to create imaginative texts, such as imagery, figures of speech, selective choice of vocabulary, rhythm, sound effects, colour and design

### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



Reading

Year 7 Q 43

## Guided

Access the site [www.australianscreen.com.au](http://www.australianscreen.com.au)

Show the film clips titled *Wading through the floods* and *The muddy aftermath*:  
from <http://australianscreen.com.au/education/environment/disasters/>

Clip no. 2 Maitland Floods: Home movie 'Wading through the floods'

Clip no. 3 Maitland Floods: Home Movie 'The muddy aftermath'

After viewing each film clip, brainstorm the events in detail including components such as:

*chairs*  
*flooding water*  
*furniture*  
*debris*  
*houses*  
*river*  
*telegraph wires*  
*animals*  
*boats*  
*people*

Students list action verbs for these objects and then compare each of these items to another object such as:

*chairs* – The chairs were floating like boats.

*flooding water* – The water was running like a herd of wildebeests.

*debris* – Debris was hanging from the telegraph wires like dirty socks on the clothes line.

### Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Brainstorm with students extreme events that could be described using similes.

Students discuss personal experiences of any of these events.

For example:

*a thunderstorm, a traffic jam, a hot day, a crowded street, a ferry ride, a car accident*

Explain that these events can be made more vivid to readers by using language that develops a picture in the reader's mind.

Using a topic that the students choose, construct a poem using similes.

When constructing, students need to think about: appearance, sound, smell and feelings.

### Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices.

### Statements of Learning for English (pp. 22, 25)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use adjectives, verbs and visual techniques to represent people, places, events and things in a chosen way.

Students draw on their knowledge of texts and language to clarify meaning. They know that figurative language, including similes, metaphors and personification, can be used to develop imagery.

### Other links

[www.australianscreen.com.au](http://www.australianscreen.com.au)  
[www.australianscreen.com.au/education/environment/disasters/](http://www.australianscreen.com.au/education/environment/disasters/)

## THE STORM

Looks like a mud puddle in the sky

And smells like mouldy leather

It sounds like a giant's stomach rumbling

And feels like being turned inside out.

Following the explicit teaching of imagery in modelled and guided reading sessions, select a descriptive passage (see suggestions below). Present this to students as a cloze passage with the examples of imagery below.

For example:

Beyond our desolate farm I can see the horizon where a few dark clouds  
\_\_\_\_\_.

It never comes, and now our dam is a patch of dry cracked mud  
surrounded by brown land.

The cicadas have been shrilling, \_\_\_\_\_. This morning they  
are quiet. The silence \_\_\_\_\_. It spreads and suffocates  
everything, \_\_\_\_\_.

steals into corners, nooks and crannies

calling impatiently for rain

like a hot dry blanket

cruelly taunt us with promises of rain

Suggested texts rich in imagery suitable for deconstruction include:

- *The Twits* by Roald Dahl
- *Blueback* by Tim Winton
- *Storm Boy* by Colin Thiele
- *Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame
- *Fox* by Margaret Wild
- *Rain Dance* by Cathy Applegate

## Skill focus: Developing the range of descriptive language STAGES 3, 4 and 5

### Strategy

Using film and photography and existing text to identify and build descriptive devices in writing

### Activities to support the strategy



### Guided

Using the *PowerPoint* presentation provided, students are asked to deconstruct and record the images they see, using:

- personification
- body vocabulary
- effective verb and noun groups.

Ask students how the words they have chosen convey their interpretation of the image.

Link to the *PowerPoint* presentation

### Independent

After brainstorming ideas using the *PowerPoint* presentation, students create a brief story orientation using these ideas.

Provide stimulus from the *Powerpoint*, pages 1 and 4, to assist them to complete the task.

### K-6 Outcome

WS3.13: Students discuss how metaphor, idiom and personification enhance own texts.

### KLA Outcomes

Visual Arts 4.4.2: Students explore the function of and relationships between artist – artwork – world and audience.

English 4.6.11: Students learn about verbal, visual and aural techniques used to create imaginative texts, such as imagery, figures of speech, selective choice of vocabulary, rhythm, sound effects, colour and design

English 5.1.12: Students learn about how inference and figurative language can be used in complex and subtle ways.

### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5

**The Box**

Today you are going to write a narrative or story.  
The idea for your story is "The Box".  
What is inside the box? How did it get there?  
Is it valuable? Perhaps it is not!  
The box might send a message or something that you believe.  
What happens in your story if the box is opened?

**Think about:**

- the characters and what they are
- the complication or problem to be solved
- how the story will end.

**Remember to:**

- plan your story before you start
- write a narrative
- pay attention to the words you choose,
- your spelling and punctuation, and paragraphs
- check and edit your writing when you have finished.

### Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices

### Statements of Learning for English (p. 27)

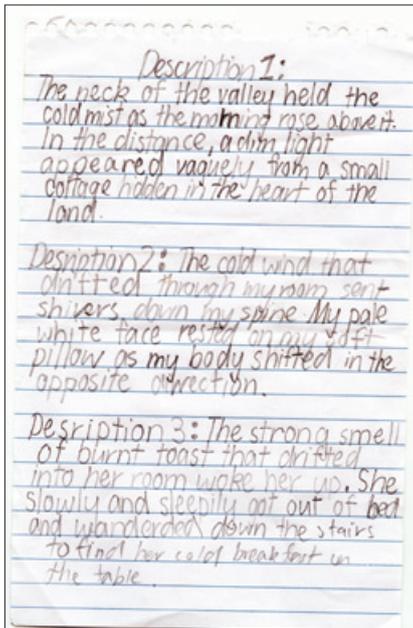
Students draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use extended noun groups and adjectival and adverbial phrases to develop characterisation, setting and plot.

## Guided

### Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Develop intellectual quality by discussing students' prior knowledge of rural landscapes and horses in terms of their behaviours, uses and riding equipment.

Stage 3 student sample



The neck of the valley held the cold mist as the morning rose above it. In the distance, a dim light appeared vaguely from a small cottage hidden in the heart of the land.

Description 1 uses personification of the landscape

Description 2 focuses on first person description

### Other links

[www.wallisandmatilda.com.au/man-from-snowy-river.shtml](http://www.wallisandmatilda.com.au/man-from-snowy-river.shtml)

[www.australianscreen.com.au](http://www.australianscreen.com.au)

[www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/man-snowy-river](http://www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/man-snowy-river)

Provide students with the Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Patterson poem – 'The Man from Snowy River'.

[www.wallisandmatilda.com.au/man-from-snowy-river.shtml](http://www.wallisandmatilda.com.au/man-from-snowy-river.shtml)

Ask students to visualise what they are reading and then, using their own words, verbalise what they visualised.

### Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Download a copy of the poem for students to deconstruct, focusing on stanzas 9 to 12.

<http://nationaltreasures.nla.gov.au/index/Treasures/item/nla.int-ex6-s22>

Discuss the narrative with a focus on stanzas 9 to 12 beginning with:

*When they reached the mountain's summit ...*

When discussing the scene, explore the use of images created by effective verb groups and other literary devices. For example, 'standing mute, halted cowed and beaten'

words I need to learn about:

saddle girths

fray  
mustered

mimosa clump

## The Man from Snowy River

Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson

**T**HERE was movement at the station, for the word had passed around  
 That the colt from old Regret had got away,  
 And had joined the wild bush horses — he was worth a thousand pound,  
 So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.  
 All the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far  
 Had mustered at the homestead overnight,  
 For the bushmen love hard riding where the wild bush horses are,  
 And the stock-horse snuffs the battle with delight.

There was Harrison, who made his pile when Pardon won the cup,  
 The old man with his hair **as white as snow;** *simile*  
 But few could ride beside him when his blood was fairly up—  
 He would go wherever horse and man could go.  
 And Clancy of the Overflow came down to lend a hand,  
 No better horseman ever held the reins;  
 For never horse could throw him while the saddle-girths would stand,  
 He learnt to ride while droving on the plains.

*verbs*  
*metaphor*  
 And one was there, **a stripling on a small and weedy beast,** *adjectives*  
 He was something like a racehorse undersized,  
 With a touch of Timor pony—three parts thoroughbred at least—  
 And such as are by mountain horsemen prized.  
 He was **hard and tough and wiry**—just the sort that won't say die—  
 There was courage in his quick impatient tread;  
**And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye,**  
 And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

But still so **slight and weedy,** one would doubt his power to stay,  
 And the old man said, "That horse will never do  
 For a long and tiring gallop—lad, you'd better stop away,  
 Those hills are far too rough for such as you."  
 So he waited **sad and wistful**—only Clancy stood his friend—  
 "I think we ought to let him come," he said;  
 "I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,  
 For both his horse and he are mountain bred.

"He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,  
 Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,  
**Where a horse's hoofs strike firelight from the flint stones every stride,**  
 The man that holds his own is good enough.  
 And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their home,  
 Where the river runs those giant hills between;  
 I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced to roam,  
 But nowhere yet such horsemen have I seen."

*imagery  
 making fire as they  
 hit rocks fast  
 "speed"*

So he went — they found the horses by the big mimosa clump —  
 They raced away towards the mountain's brow,  
 And the old man gave his orders, 'Boys, go at them from the jump,  
 No use to try for fancy riding now.

Ask students to highlight unfamiliar or unknown words, particularly verbs, adjectives and nouns. Ask students to write down and research unknown nouns such as: gorges, wildhop scrub, saplings, bridle, bloodhound. Discuss unfamiliar terms such as "colt of Old Regret."

**Develop students' problematic thinking (QTF) through probing questions such as:**

- *Look at the title and consider the content. What is the author telling us about?*
- *What words were difficult to understand and how did this create a problem in understanding the content and messages in the poem?*

Examine lines in the poem which use unusual or less common descriptions and discuss these with the students such as:

*...saw him ply the stockwhip...*

*...his pluck was still undaunted...*

Ask questions like:

- *What difficulties or confusions did you encounter with the descriptive language or specific nouns?*
- *What influence does context have on understanding the content of the text?*
- *How does learning about different contexts, environments and issues help us to understand texts?*
- *Why do you think these problems in interpreting the vocabulary occurred?*

Discuss 21st Century vocabulary that would have been difficult for people living in the 1890s to understand such as 'Google, wiki, blog, television, CD, computer' etc.

The poem was written in 1890. Patterson claimed he was attempting to reach urbanised Australians. Ask students:

- *How has the issue in the poem overcome the problem of time and remained appropriate to this century?*
- *How has the issue in the poem become isolated from or disassociated from this century?*

To assist students identify the issues, problems and relevance to today's society, refer them to the following links;

[http://www.brumbywatchaustralia.com/old\\_index.htm](http://www.brumbywatchaustralia.com/old_index.htm)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brumby>

Ask students to answer the following questions:

- *What is the struggle or problem that Patterson is trying to represent in the poem?*
- *How do the horsemen attempt to solve the problem and would the solution be different 1890 to 2008?*
- *After viewing film clip number three, how would the Brumby perceive the problem?*

In the poem, the horsemen are chasing after an old racehorse that has escaped. The capture of this horse was worth a great deal of money to the horsemen. Discuss:

- *Who was the owner of the racehorse and why had it become so notorious?*
- *Who is seen as the hero and how are they portrayed?*

Go to: [www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/man-snowy-river/](http://www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/man-snowy-river/)

Present the film clip to investigate one interpretation of the imagery in the film adaptation. Ask students:

- *How did this scene increase/decrease/change your understanding of the poem?*
- *What written imagery was clearly expressed in the film?*

Ask students to quote stanzas from the poem such as:

*...any slip was death...*

*...stockwhips woke the echoes...*

- *How did the film overcome the language problems with their use of sound, light, pacing and camera angles?*

After discussing stanzas 9 to 12 from the poem, show the class clip no. 3 'A stripling on a wild and weedy beast'.

Discuss the effect of the following elements:

- Sound
- Pacing (slow and fast motion)
- Close ups and panning shots
- Colour
- Last scene of the horse and audience meeting eye to eye – character engagement

Return to the poem. Now deconstruct the poem highlighting the imagery as it is read.

Categorise the imagery from the poem using the following table as a guide. Examples have been included.

<b>Example</b>	<b>Type of device</b>	<b>Image created</b>
a stripling on a small and weedy beast	Effective adjectives and nouns	Weak, powerless horse and inexperienced rider
And he wore a badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye.	Metaphor	Good self esteem and determination of character.

## Independent

### Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Students use the thesaurus to develop words that match the elements above. Students then write a narrative orientation to the scene in their own words.

# Skill Focus: Identifying alliteration in sentences

## STAGES 4–5

### Strategy

Highlighting for students how successful writers craft descriptions using alliteration

### Activities to support the strategy

Alliteration is a literary device used to develop mood and effect. The analysis of its use assists students to identify and use it in their own writing.

Question what students know about alliteration:

- How do you think alliteration is used?
- What types of texts is alliteration used in? (e.g. poetry, narrative, song, plays)
- Why do you think it is used?
- Do you think it is effective?

Ask students to provide reasoned arguments for their decisions and clarify the concept.

Explore the concept in context by analysing and critically reviewing a Shakespeare play.

Access:

[www.bellshakespeare.com.au/education2008/14resources/14resources.html](http://www.bellshakespeare.com.au/education2008/14resources/14resources.html)

This is a rich resource website which also contains a teachers' kit for Shakespearean plays.

Bell Shakespeare Company also has regional touring education initiatives and Shakespeare in schools programmes.

### Guided

Teachers can analyse sections of the play for examples of alliteration or students can identify the examples in excerpts or the full version available on the link: [www.shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/full.html](http://www.shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/full.html)

Some examples of alliteration in the play are:

'Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air.'

'The merciless Macdonwald'

'Great Glamis!'

### Independent

Students are given a number of excerpts from *Macbeth* and identify (highlight then record) the use of alliteration and analyse:

- what the words mean
- how they build effect and mood (e.g. surprise, anger, fear).

### KLA Outcomes

Drama 5.1.3: Interprets and enacts drama using scripted text

English 4.6.11: Students learn about verbal, aural and visual techniques used to create imaginative texts, such as imagery, figures of speech, selective choice of vocabulary, rhythm, sound effects, colour and design

### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



### Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices

### Statements of Learning for English (p. 27)

Students draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use particular textual resources to represent people, places, events and things in ways that appeal to certain groups.

### Other links

[www.bellshakespeare.com.au/education2008/14resources/14resources.html](http://www.bellshakespeare.com.au/education2008/14resources/14resources.html)

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/full.html>

# Skill Focus: Developing the range of descriptive language

## STAGES 4–5

### Strategy

Deconstructing texts written by others

When students write narratives, they should aim to make language choices that heighten the reader’s interest in the story. Students should be shown the functions of the different aspects of narrative text and also the kinds of words that are most effective in describing characters and events.

### Activities to support the strategy

#### Guided

#### Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Review definitions of nouns, noun groups, adjectives, imagery and expressive verbs and adverbs. The following table could be provided or developed with the class.

Aspect of meaning	Aspects of grammar	Examples
Who or what is involved: people, places, things, concepts, themes, emotions	Noun group  Factual and opinion adjectives  Figurative language  Whole clauses	flying shards of crystal with sharp edges;  a courageous act;  thunder rumbling like a drum;  an indescribable wave of terror that sent shivers up my spine
What is happening: events, activities, behaviours, states of being, relationships	Verb groups Different types of verbs: – action verbs to describe events – saying verbs to express direct speech – thinking/feeling verbs to express the thoughts and emotional responses of the characters or narrator	tried to escape; began howling and growling; smashed; shattered; huddled; exploded; shrieked; complained; whimpered; thought; wondered; knew; expected; worried
What is the context: the circumstances surrounding the events – when (the time), where (the setting), how (manner) and why (reason)	Adverbials: adverbs, adverbial phrases and prepositional phrases	fortunately; reluctantly; miserably; because of the terrible weather; a few moments later ...; during the night ...; into the basement; along the ridge; with an almighty heave

### KLA Outcomes

- English 4.1.18: Students learn about inference and figurative language
- English 5.6.3: Students learn to compose texts that demonstrate originality and ingenuity in content and language
- English 5.1.12: Students learn about how inference and figurative language can be used in complex and subtle ways
- English 5.4.13: Students learn about codes and conventions, including emotive, evocative and impersonal language and signs used to signal tone, mood and atmosphere in written texts

### Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 5  
Vocabulary



Reading

Year 7 Q: 45  
Year 9 Q: 23, 25 and 42

### Item Descriptor

Students develop a wide range of more precise language choices

### Statements of Learning for English (p. 27)

Students draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use extended noun groups and adjectival and adverbial phrases to develop characterisation, setting and plot.

Students can give examples of these devices.

In the text below, the student has enhanced the descriptiveness of the writing by using effective **nouns and noun groups** and **imagery** to create clear and very evocative pictures in the reader's mind of what the character was seeing, feeling and experiencing.

The student has also used **expressive verbs and adverbs** to tell the reader how things were done.

Using this shared text, the teacher works through the passage highlighting the literary devices. A copy of the passage without the literary devices highlighted is below.

### **The Deep Blue Nothing**

The flicks of silver fish tails sent flashes of light into my eyes. I swam through the school of herring, chasing them into the long sea grass. My laughter sent a stream of bubbles to the surface. I was free, weightless: nothing could hold me back. I kicked my legs and was propelled to the surface for my next breath. Then I could return to my underwater paradise, where I could kick and twist and ...

I felt something catch my ankle as my fingertips skimmed out of the water. I kicked again but I couldn't get my face to the air. I looked down. A fishing line, almost invisible, was wrapped around my ankle, cutting into the skin. I struggled to free myself but I only tightened it further. My head began to pound in lust for oxygen, but, hard as I tried, my fingers could do nothing to budge the miniscule knots. My lungs screamed for air, my throat burned, my head was in agony. In a last desperate act, I clawed for the surface. Blood flow was cut off to my foot and my head was still half a metre underwater. My insides burning, my skin freezing, my arms and legs exhausted, I relaxed. I took a deep breath in and felt a surge of icy water rush down my throat.

My head stopped hurting. All pain had disappeared, as had the water, the sea grass and the school of herring. In their place – nothing. An expanse of nothingness met my eyes. It was white; there was no colour. There was no heat, but I felt no cold. Something – a voice, maybe my own – said: 'You're dying.' I was. But I felt no sadness. I wasn't angry, disappointed, or even slightly annoyed. I was forgetting my life, my past and how to feel. I was dying.

In front of me, a shape formed out of nothing. I think it was called a 'door'. Yes, definitely a 'door'. It wasn't particularly interesting, but I don't think a 'door' is an object of great interest.

The handle turned silently: there was no noise here. The door began to open and the brightest, purest light imaginable shone out. Through the door – that was it. How simple it all was! I was so close now. The lack of emotion I thought I felt could have been happiness. It was so easy now ...

'I can feel a pulse!' Someone yelled this in the silence. That wasn't right! The door was closing; the light faded. It all dissolved back into the nothing. The nothing grew dark. Then the light, hot and dazzling, shone at me again.

The sun was in its cloudless blue sky, shining and beaming. Everything came back: sun, beach, herring, seagrass, swimming, fishing line, ankle. But they'd never been gone, had they? But yes, they did go and the door came out of the nothing. I smiled. It had all been so simple. Maybe one day I'd go back, and then I'd make it through that doorway!

## The Deep Blue Nothing

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## Independent

Students read through the passage below and highlight the literary devices used to create strong imagery.

### **The Farewell**

Ruben signed up for war and then leaked the news gently to his mother. Her heart sank into the well of despair as her fear stole her comfort and feeling of safety.

As the morning tapped on his bedroom window telling him it was time to leave, he rose and took a last glimpse of the dancing leaves from the oak tree that stood outside his window. Secretly he watched his mother asleep in her bed comforted under the waves of sheets and the smell of fresh linen. Then he woke the kitchen and made tea and toast. It was very early and his breath made steam.

Silently Ruben's mother shadowed the kitchen doorway. Then sat; her son would sit for the last time at her breakfast table. Together they ate, sipping tea and bravery together before making their way to the farewell place.

Then they began their silent walk to the old ship that stood as guard in the port and stood waiting to pull the service men from their homes. His fear prickled the back of his neck but both mother and son were held high by their efforts to send unspoken messages of calm to each other. The whistle screamed and called the men aboard the ship. It groaned as the ocean pulled it away to war disappearing on the horizon as if it had never been there at all.

by Aden Bates, Year 6

## Worksheet (s23a09)

<b>Where?</b>	<b>When?</b>	<b>Why?</b>	<b>How?</b>	<b>With whom?</b>
...just beyond the stop sign.	...day and night.			