

Westerly Teaching Resource—Writing and Community

All tasks in this unit of work are intended for formative purposes only. They are designed to monitor learning and provide feedback, and to support teachers to inform their teaching and for students to inform their learning. All tasks can be adapted and expanded to become summative assessments but should not be used as summative assessments in their current format.

Rationale:

Using a selection of texts from *Westerly* magazine, this lesson has been prepared for students in Year 12. The scope of activities is easily customisable to suit group and individual skill levels. This lesson aims to guide students through the texts to help them develop their skills in synthesising information from a range of sources, then use these skills to explore perspective in literary texts.

This lesson includes creative prompts to reinforce and extend its concepts. It is important to note that some texts in the magazine are not appropriate for students and all works should be reviewed by teachers prior to dissemination to ensure they are appropriate for the intended student group.

What will the materials cover?

All materials have been mapped to the WA Year 12 Literature syllabus. The lesson focuses on students interpreting ideas and arguments in a range of texts and contexts. The following texts have been selected from *Westerly*:

- [‘Night at the Office’ by Ethel Webb Bundell](#) (from *Westerly* 39.3)
- [‘The Space Inside His Fist’ by Melinda Smith](#) (from *Westerly* 64.1)

Curriculum Links:

This lesson has been linked to the Year 12 Literature syllabus. Specific concepts have been highlighted.

Evaluate the ways in which literary texts represent culture and identity, including:

- how readers are influenced to respond to their own and others’ cultural experiences
- the power of language to represent ideas, events and people in particular ways, understanding that language is a cultural medium and that its meanings may vary according to context
- how representations of culture support or challenge various ideologies. Representations may reinforce habitual ways of thinking about the world or they may challenge popular ways of thinking, and in doing so, reshape values, attitudes and beliefs
- the ways in which authors represent Australian culture, place and identity both to Australians and the wider world.

Evaluate and reflect on how representations of culture and identity vary in different texts and forms of texts, including:

- the ways in which representations of the past allow a nation or culture to recognise itself
- how representations vary according to the discourse. Different groups of people use different terms to represent their ideas about the world and these different discourses (ways of thinking and speaking) offer particular representations of the world
- the impact of the use of literary conventions and stylistic techniques
- the ways in which language, structural and stylistic choices communicate values and attitudes and shed new light on familiar ideas
- how reading intertextually helps readers to understand and critique representations
- the influence of the reader's context, cultural assumptions, social position and gender.

Create imaginative texts, including:

- adapting medium, form, style, point of view and language
- experimenting with elements of style and voice to achieve specific effects
- manipulating literary conventions for different audiences and contexts
- reflecting on the ways in which the expectations and values of audiences might shape the created text.

Teaching Sequence:

0. Establishing Prior Knowledge

Students brainstorm their understanding of perspective: recall that texts can be constructed to position the reader to receive a certain ideological message. Students should be encouraged to discuss some of the reading perspectives that they're familiar with, for example Marxist or feminist perspectives.

1. Text Exploration

[‘Night at the Office’ by Ethel Webb Bundell](#) (from *Westerly* 39.3)

[‘The Space Inside His Fist’ by Melinda Smith](#) (from *Westerly* 64.1)

Students should have access to printed or electronic copies of the texts. Students should read both texts prior to the class, and ‘The Space Inside His Fist’ may be read aloud by the class.

2. Exploring Class and Value in ‘Night at the Office’

Initial Analysis

What narrative techniques are used in the text to build suspense throughout the text? Is that suspense released? If so, how?

Why is Celia so nervous throughout the text? What does this suggest about her character? How does this relate to the relationship between the characters?

Further Analysis

“The voice of a literary work is then the specific group of characteristics displayed by the narrator or poetic ‘speaker’ (or, in some uses, the actual author behind them), assessed in terms of tone, style, or personality. Distinctions between various kinds of narrative voice tend to be distinctions between kinds of narrator in terms of how they **address the reader (rather than in terms of their perception of events)**, as in the distinct concept of point of view.”
(Chris Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, OUP, 2008.)

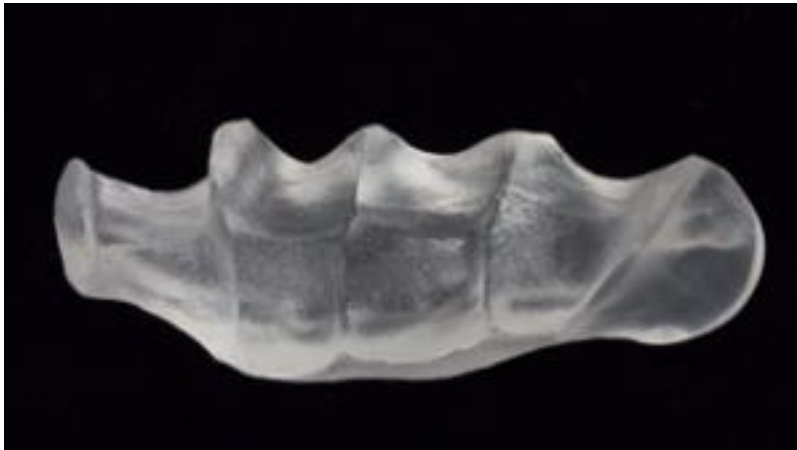
Going Deeper: Creative Responses

After receiving the envelope, Celia gets into her car. Write a short paragraph about what happens next. Think critically about the voice of the text and stay consistent with what you know so far. You can do this by using similar words and a similar tone of the poem.

Imagine Celia is a stand-up comic. How would she tell this story and how would the voice change? Consider that a comedic piece will be spoken and must flow. Use rhythm to create shifts in pace and emphasis and create a persuasive piece that has a particular purpose with clear direction and structure.

3. Exploring ekphrasis and ‘The Space Inside His Fist’

Initial Analysis



A glasswork by Neil Roberts / Luna Ryan 1995/2017, lead crystal, cast from terracotta original, edition of 20, 9.8 × 3.4 × 3.4 (irreg).

Before reading the poem, look at the glasswork that inspired it (picture above) and the title. In pairs, discuss what the two make you feel and how you might respond personally in writing.

Further Analysis

The glasswork and the poem attempt to capture and make meaning from something that is usually transient. Where in the poem do you see transience and conversely, permanence?

Going Deeper: Creative Response

Find an artwork which appeals to you from within the State Gallery's collection (online) and respond in an ekphrastic manner. Structure your response across two parts. In the first part, respond to the aesthetic qualities of the artwork; in the second, consider the emotional response and the associations this work has for you. The title of your piece should be the same title as the artwork.