

Westerly Teaching Resource—History 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 old and new texts from *Westerly* magazine, this lesson has been prepared for students in Year 11. The scope of activities is easily customisable to suit group and individual skill levels. This lesson aims to develop students' analytical reading skills by guiding them through culturally informed interpretations of literary devices.

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 English curriculum. The lesson focuses on students interpreting ideas and arguments in a range of texts and contexts. The following texts have been selected from *Westerly*:

- [‘Potholes’ by Alana Hunt](#) (from *Westerly* 63.1)
- [‘Blood-Sonnet Chronicles’ by Natalie Harkin](#) (from *Westerly* 63.1)

Curriculum Links:

This lesson has been linked to the Year 11 syllabus. Specific concepts have been highlighted.

Investigate the relationships between language, context and meaning by:

- explaining how texts are created in and for different contexts
- analysing how language choices are made for different purposes and in different contexts using appropriate metalanguage
- evaluating the choice of mode and medium in shaping the response of audiences, including digital texts.

Examine the language, structure and features of imaginative, interpretive and persuasive texts, including:

- explaining the ways language features, text structures and conventions communicate ideas and perspectives
- explaining the ways text structures, language features and stylistic choices are used in different types of texts
- analysing how vocabulary, idiom and rhetoric are used for different purposes and contexts

- evaluating the impact of description and imagery.

Analyse and evaluate how responses to texts, including students' own responses, are influenced by:

- purpose, taking into account that a text's purpose is often open to debate
- personal, social and cultural context
- the use of techniques associated with imaginative, interpretive and persuasive texts.

Teaching Sequence:

0. Establishing Prior Knowledge

Students discuss their understanding of Indigenous Australian perspectives. Brainstorm some of the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interpretations of Australian settlement.

1. Text Exploration

['Potholes' by Alana Hunt](#)

['Blood-Sonnet Chronicles' by Natalie Harkin](#)

Students should have access to printed or electronic copies of the documents. Students should read 'Potholes' silently, and selected parts (section V is recommended) aloud. Read 'Blood-Sonnet Chronicles' aloud.

2. Exploring Metaphor, Perspective and Community in 'Potholes'

Initial Analysis

'It just sits there, hanging. Impossible to see, or perhaps just too easy to ignore. Like fresh, clear rain falling in a muddied pothole.' Where do you find this quote in the text and what is it referring to?

Where else do you see references to potholes in the text? Why do you think the author is using the word 'potholes'? What do you think it might mean? Hint: It's not potholes.

As 'Potholes' is the title of the text, what do you think the author is trying to convey with its use?

Identification of Language Features and Context

Alana Hunt compares her experience of whiteness with the experiences of the Indigenous people around her.

Identify places in the text which you could connect to your own experiences. Why did these parts feel familiar or relatable to you? What words were used specifically that you could relate to and why? How did this influence your reading of the text? Did you feel connected to the text?

Were there any parts of the text that felt alien to you? Identify where this occurred and consider why the author might have done that.

Were there any words that were used specifically to make the reader feel uncomfortable? If so, where? Again, consider why the author did that.

3. Perspective, Race, and Culture in ‘Blood Sonnet Chronicles’

Initial Analysis

Evaluate how important the structure of the poem is for the reader to create meaning and interpret the key ideas presented in the text.

The sonnet form is quite prescriptive and has certain rules it has to follow. How might that relate to the history of domestic service that Harkin interrogates?

Identification of Language Features and Context

What constraints does the sonnet form enact? How does this impact the way we read the poem? Are there any moments in the poem wherein the rhythm felt awkward or changed significantly? Why do you think that was included? What might the author be trying to say about domestic service by changing the rhythm significantly?

Going Deeper

A comparison with *Potholes* by Alana Hunt, to be completed in pairs using a Venn diagram.

Create a Venn diagram on an A3 piece of paper and put the title of each piece above each circle. Identify similarities and differences in the writing and note them down. These include similarities and differences in: narrative techniques, language features, themes, ideas, values, attitudes and issues.

Once the Venn diagram is complete, answer the following questions on the poster:

- Both texts deal with the Stolen Generations and the trauma this has caused. Identify and discuss the use of differences in narrative techniques between the two texts and how these relate to trauma caused by the Stolen Generations.
- In particular, how does the structure of the texts change the possibilities for the reader in constructing meaning?
- Think about the language used in each text. Identify and contrast the different symbols utilised, and how these are developed in each work through different narrative techniques and language features.
- Compare and contrast paragraph ‘V’ in *Potholes* and ‘Charlotte’ in *Blood-Sonnet Chronicles* by identifying the words that have been used in each and how they are similar and different. Note these similarities and differences down on your A3 sheet.