

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: This resource is aimed at explicitly teaching the Literature strand of the Year 9 curriculum. The scope of these resources can be scaffolded to meet students in Years 7 and 8 and can be extended for students in upper school. It is important to note that the poem used may not be deemed suitable for students in lower years and teachers should always read the text before showing students. This unit of work only covers one poem, but the approach can be adapted to a range of poems and short stories.

Curriculum Links: This resource has been mapped to the Year 9 English curriculum for Western Australia. The curriculum links are below with the concepts being targeted highlighted.

LITERATURE AND CONTEXT

- Interpret and compare how **representations of people and culture** in literary texts are drawn from **different historical, social and cultural contexts**.

RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

- Present an argument about a literary text based on **initial impressions and subsequent analysis** of the whole text
- Reflect on, discuss and explore notions of **literary value** and how and why such notions **vary according to context**
- Explore and reflect on **personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts**

EXAMINING LITERATURE

- Analyse texts from **familiar and unfamiliar contexts**, and discuss and evaluate their content and the appeal of an individual author's literary style
- Investigate and experiment with the **use and effect of extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, icons, myths and symbolism** in texts, for example poetry, short films, graphic novels, and plays on similar themes
- Analyse **text structures and language features** of literary texts, and make relevant comparisons with other texts.

Teaching Sequence:

1. **Establishing Prior Knowledge:** Students create a mind-map/brainstorm/word wall of their understanding of **poetic techniques, language features, literary style, representations and**

contexts. Students can do this individually, in pairs, small groups or as a class. Any gaps should be filled in by the teacher.

Establish a common understanding of the concepts as a class. [Here](#) are the SCSA definitions and [here](#) are the Australian Education Services definitions, which are a good starting point but elaborate on these as needed.

2. Provide students with a copy of the poem without the author and title.

Poem:

the falling man
falls
head first
arrow-like
knee bent as
a genuflect
passes pyres
a calm and pointed
bird
the zenith too high
and hot a perch
he falls
resigned as rain
passes America
crumbling
into itself
his white shirt
flapping
in the soot
twin candles
snuffing out
2,000 birthdays
2 puffs 2 slices
through
the cake is rotten
and everybody
screams—
but not the man
free falling

he plummets
in his chosen
flight
the tails of his
coat
gentle flags
all his prayers
are silent
said
small beads
buried quiet
in his bones
16 years
he is falling
still
freeze-frame
caught
he lives
despite
the ash
forever leaping
forever
the tipping
jug
the plunging
icon in
suspended
holy
flight

Initial Impressions: Show the students the poem without the title or the author's name and discuss:

- What are your initial thoughts about this poem?
- What do you think it's about? Why?
- What language features can you find? Highlight the language features and write what they are.
TEACHER NOTE: You can do this as a class, in pairs or individually. It's important all students have a copy of the poem either electronically or physically to make annotations.
- How do these language features affect your understanding of the poem? Add your thoughts to your annotations.
- What do you notice about the structure of the poem?
- What poetic devices are used in this poem? Highlight and annotate these.
- Why would the author use these poetic devices? What is their purpose and how do they impact on your understanding of the poem?
- What mood do you feel when reading this poem? What mood do you think the author is trying to establish? What words can you find that suggest this mood?

3. Contextual Information: Give the students the title and author's name, then discuss:

- Who was Icarus? If students don't know, here is a link [here](#) that explains the myth briefly.
- What do you think it means to be 'Like Icarus'? Share with a partner.
- Tell students this poem is based on an image. Ask students to draw what that image might look like and write a justification for their choices using evidence from the poem to support their claims.

If students have laptops/tablets, have them research the image 'Falling Man' by Richard Drew. If not, show students the image '[Falling Man](#)' by Richard Drew from the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City.

TEACHER NOTE: The image can be quite confronting for some students. As always, check if it's appropriate with your students before use.

4. Going Deeper:

Do a think-pair-share about 9/11. The students may have some or no contextual understanding of this event. If students have limited knowledge of this event, complete some research about the event. Be mindful that graphic images can be found when Googling 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Alternatively, the following documentaries can help:

- *102 Minutes That Changed America* (Rated M)
- *Fahrenheit 11/9* (Rated M)

There are multiple other documentaries about the event, but they may not be appropriate for your students.

Use [this website](#) to share the contextual information about the image with students.

5. Task 1: These can be done as a class discussion, partner discussion or comprehension questions.

- How does this contextual information help you understand the poem?
- How is the man represented in the image and does this representation change in the poem? What words or phrases can you find to support this interpretation of the representation?
- How does your reaction to the poem change now that you understand more about the context?
- Go through your annotations of the language features and poetic devices and add any additional contextual information you are now able to pick up.
- How has the structure of the poem been influenced by the context of the event?
- Does the meaning of the title of the poem change with contextual understanding of the event? If so, how?

Using the answers to the above questions, write a short answer response to the following question:
Explain how context impacts your interpretation of the poem.

6. **Task 2: Create a poem using a photograph as inspiration. In your poem, experiment with a variety of language features and poetic devices to create different levels of meaning. Make sure you are using the contextual information provided to help you represent your ideas effectively.**

Here are some suggested images:

- [‘Kissing Couple’](#) by Rich Lam
- [National Geographic](#) contest winners 2019
- [‘Happiness’](#) by Mohamed Mahdy

Extension: Create a poem using a photograph as inspiration. Your poem should have a sustained voice and use structure and language for a specific purpose and intended audience.

7. Further activities:

As a class discuss what literary value means. If students are unsure, [this website](#) might help.

Explore the structure of reviews in the *Westerly* magazines. Suggested reviews:

- *Westerly* 63.1: Review of *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*
https://westerlymag.com.au/digital_archive_articles/westerly-63-1/63.1.190-194.pdf
- *Westerly* 42.2: Review of Review of editing the moon, body-flame, Wooroloo, and The Willing Eye
https://westerlymag.com.au/digital_archive_articles/westerly-44-2/44.2.131-135.pdf
- *Westerly* 62.2: A review of *Billy Sing* by Ouyang Yu
https://westerlymag.com.au/digital_archive_articles/westerly-62-2/62.2.337-339.pdf

TEACHER NOTE: The language used in many of these reviews will be challenging for students, so focus their attention on the structure of the review.

Ask students:

- How do the reviews start?
- What information is prioritised in the reviews?
- How do the reviews end?

Students should use their findings to create a template for a review.

Here is a rough structure for a review if students need it:

- Start with a statement about the poem or a quote from the poem.
- Include the name of the author, the year of publication and a brief explanation of what the poem is about.
- Provide a brief summary of the poem and include some evidence from the poem as support.
- Provide a critique of the poem and include some discussion about its literary value.
- End with a quote or a statement about the overall effect/impact/response to the poem.

- 8. Task 3:** Write a review of *Like Icarus*. Your review should be clearly structured with an introduction, contextual information about the poem, your opinion about the literary value of the poem, and why the reader should trust your judgement.

Points to think about when writing the review:

- Who are you writing for? An American or Australian audience? How would the reception of the review be different if it was for an American audience?
- How is the 'Falling Man' represented in the poem? How does the representation of the man help you understand the 9/11 terrorist attacks?
- What is the literary style of the poem?
- Do you think the poem has literary value? Why/why not?

Your review should include a title and you can incorporate an image as well.