

Stage 3 unit starter

'Our Home is Dirt by Sea'

Rationale

This unit starter focusses on the poetry anthology 'Our Home is Dirt by Sea'; a diverse range of children's poetry selected by Dianne Bates to excite and engage Australian children. This book offers various views of Australian culture through poems grouped under headings including, 'Mostly Me', 'Sport', 'Families', 'School', 'People', 'Animals' and 'Special Times'. Students will explore the different *representations* of each aspect of Australia and the overall depiction of our country by considering the way the codes and conventions specific to poetry are used along with symbolism to position us. The book provides an opportunity to explore the importance of *context* in regard to both the composition and response to texts and how our culture influences and exposes our beliefs, customs, language and values. The *literary value* of poetry in general and the book in particular, can be explored through class discussions of the students' views before and after analysis of poems highlighting the layers of meaning, complexity of ideas and techniques used along with the effects achieved.



Outcomes

EN3-1A, EN3-2A, EN3-3A, EN3-5B, EN3-6B, EN3-7C, EN3-8D, EN3-9E

Concept/s

Context: Students begin to recognise how context may be expressed in texts. Students learn that

- specific contexts require particular forms and language
- their own context affects the way they respond to and compose texts
- context includes clearly identifiable elements such as purpose, intended audience and medium as well as more complex and diffuse influences such as culture
- culture, as a way of living, involves beliefs, customs, language and values and is reflected in texts
- cultural context refers to the context of composition as well as to the context of response

Literary Value: Students begin to understand that texts can be valued for the ways they convey experiences and ideas. Students learn that

- texts that have several layers of meaning or that can be interpreted in various ways can be satisfying
- texts that are thought-provoking and extend one's understanding of the world are valued

Representation: Students understand that representations position audiences to adopt a particular response. They learn that

- information and ideas may be represented symbolically
- representation in each mode operates according to its own codes and conventions
- representations may be adapted for different audiences
- representations influence response

Texts

Our Home is Dirt by Sea: Australian poems for Australian Kids, selected by Dianne Bates, Walker Books, Australia, 2016

At the Beach by Roland Harvey, Allen and Unwin, Australia, 2006

Focus questions for responding and composing




- How does context effect both composition of and responses to texts?
- How are culture and context connected?
- Why is poetry valued in our society?
- How do these poems create representations of Australia and how do they influence our responses?

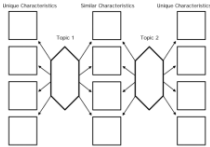

Prior knowledge



- Poetry forms and features

Assessment

Students choose their favourite poem from their own work and refine it, with the support of peers, and edit it prior to submitting it for publishing in the class anthology.

	Processes	Lesson Sequence	Evidence of learning
	<p>Understanding</p> <p>In responding and composing students draw from a range of strategies to interpret information and ideas in texts. They recognise and explain how language and structures communicate ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain to students that the context of a text can be expressed as the purpose, intended audience and the medium of a text. Ask the students to answer the questions: <i>Who is the intended audience? What is the medium of the text?</i> and <i>What is the purpose of the text?</i> They will answer the first two easily by looking at the title of the book and glancing through the pages of the book, but may not be as sure of the purpose. Read the Forward to the students and identify the different purposes provided including wanting to honour specific Australian poets, appeal to children and make them have an 'Ah' moment, maybe learn them off by heart or maybe want to write your own. This can also be linked to the perceived literary value of this text. Ask students why the composer values poetry as a form and what does she hope to achieve in putting this anthology together. (Context, Literary Value) Explain to students we can also consider the cultural context of the book revealing a way of living, involving beliefs, customs, language and values. Choose a range of poems from the anthology to share with students and try to identify the cultural context that is presented. (Context) 	<p>Discussion Imaginative drawing</p>
	<p>Engage personally</p> <p>Students explore more formal and informal ways to express their personal responses, showing an awareness of the impact of their own and others' language choices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students choose one of the sections of the book to explore more closely. Read 3-4 poems from that section and fill in a table explaining what they like about each poem, dislike about each and the way their own experiences influence their thoughts about the representations of Australia presented. Provide students with examples of ways they could express their opinions, if necessary. For example, <i>The simile '...' was great as it was a clever connection. The unique language like '...' was interesting. The pun '...' made me laugh. The humour... The tone... Or Confusing language like '...' made it hard to understand</i> rather than just writing it's boring, dumb etc. (Representation, Context, Literary Value) Students then choose their favourite poem to adapt to represent their own view of an aspect of Australia, i.e. a student likes the <i>Horse Riding</i> poem but adapts the form to write about skateboarding. Share their poem with a group of peers and discuss ways it reflects their view of the world and what they were trying to tell their audience. (Representation, Context) 	<p>Table Adapted poem and discussion</p>
	<p>Connecting</p> <p>Through responding and composing students closely compare aspects of language in and between texts to explore how texts may be connected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast the poems in the 'Families' section to identify a similar feature/ technique then how they use this to represent differences in families and then how this leads to a shared view of families in Australian culture. For example, <i>They are all written in first person from a child's point of view → one looks at unique parents, one is fighting and name calling with their sister, one is in trouble shopping etc. → but all create a view of love and acceptance in families.</i> Discuss with students the ways these representations influence our thinking about families and what they mean to Australians. Ask students to write a poem about their family. (Representation) 	<p>Compare and contrast sentences Characteristics chart</p>

Processes	Lesson Sequence	Evidence of learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare the picture book 'At the Beach' by Roland Harvey (or another type of text that represents the beach) to the poem <i>A Beach of My Own</i>. Complete a characteristics chart considering the elements of context they can find (beliefs, customs, language and values) as well as the links to purpose, audience and medium. Discuss the range of language features used in the poem, including connectives such as 'So too' the use of ellipsis and the 'Please note:' to close the poem, the use of numbered short statements of rules etc. Ask students to copy the form and write a poem titled, 'A School of My Own' (Context) 	
 <p>Engaging critically Through responding and composing students recognise that texts can influence and position responders. They analyse and evaluate different ideas and values in texts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with students a range of poems that use symbolism. Identify the information and ideas that are linked to the symbolism and decide whether understanding the symbolism is dependent on their Australian cultural context. For example, <i>The Tree</i>, <i>Christmas Visitor</i>, <i>Monday Blues</i>, <i>Camping</i>, rely on understanding the symbolism of elements of Australian history, the outback, a bad day, and nature. After discussing these, students write statements related to the effectiveness of symbolism as a technique. Use a scaffold if necessary to support student writing. For example, 'The poem...uses the symbolism of ...to represent ... as seen in the line ...This use of symbolism is effective/ not effective because...' (Representation, Context) Students consider the literary value of a text linked to our definition for this stage. Provide them with a checklist and then assign them to analyse some of the poems not studied by the class as yet. Students evaluate the poem against the checklist and then report back to the class. Discuss the findings and decide on how they would describe the literary value of this text as a whole. (Literary value) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Checklist of indicators of literary value</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conveys experiences and ideas in interesting ways <input type="checkbox"/> There are several levels of meaning <input type="checkbox"/> It can be interpreted in various ways <input type="checkbox"/> It is thought provoking <input type="checkbox"/> It extends our understanding of the world 	<p>Discussion Evaluative statements</p> <p>Checklist and evaluation</p>

	<p>Experimenting Students experiment with text structures, language features and textual concepts to adapt texts and ideas for different purposes and in a range of modes and media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students to read the poem <i>Fishermen</i> silently in their heads. Then ask if they can understand the words and identify what the author has done. The poem cleverly uses slang and merges words together with incorrect spelling to create dialogue between two people. For example, the opening 4 lines are ‘Hiyamayt. / Lobuddy. / Binearlong? / Cuplours.’ Then read it out aloud in pairs. Discuss the effect it creates and the students’ views of the technique. Also discuss the literary value of the poem in relation to this technique and then considering the inventiveness and the extra layers of meaning it presents. Ask students to work in pairs to write a conversation representing a shared school experience. Then students present their poems to the class. (Representation, Literary value) • Read the poem <i>Hills</i> with students and identify the intended audience, medium and the purpose through an analysis of the techniques. The poem conveys the joy and exhilaration of running down the hill out of control, through the language used, the punctuation, the rhythm and rhyme as well as the sensory detail. Have students now consider what other purposes a poem about hills could serve, e.g. to warn of danger of running down it, to explore its flora and fauna, to describe a great view or the feeling of being alone or brave at reaching the summit etc. Ask students to brainstorm ways they could convey this through their writing and then write a new hill poem with their new chosen purpose. (Context) 	<p>Writing in dialect/dialogue style</p> <p>Creating <i>Hills</i> poem in new context</p>
	<p>Reflecting Students identify, use and discuss text processing strategies and assess the development of their own skills against agreed criteria. They consider strategies for collaborating with their peers and reflect on their learning achievements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to reflect on their view of the value of poetry before and after this unit of work. Explain why they think they have changed their opinion or what activities have confirmed their original views. • As part of the Assessment task, ask students to reflect on their work in this unit by answering the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which poem writing activity did you like the best in the unit? ○ What was good about this activity? ○ What poem do you think is your best? Why do you think it is? ○ What does this tell you about the way you work best? <p>Students choose their favourite poem, which they will be working on for the assessment task and will be added to the class anthology. Students need to think of 3 questions they could ask peers to gain feedback on how well their poem achieves its purpose. For example, ‘Did you understand the symbolism I used?’ ‘Could you understand the slang?’ ‘Did the simile make a strong picture in your head?’ ‘Could you recognise this Australian setting?’ etc. Students then work in small groups and share their favourite poem and take notes on the feedback received. Students then use this to help them decide on any changes to be made to their poem before they edit and publish for submission. The reflection questions and peer feedback and answers worksheet should be submitted with the final poem.</p>	<p>Reflective paragraph</p>

The intention of this unit starter is to illustrate teaching and learning activities for each of the processes.

The processes may be taught in any order to cater for the needs of all learners and further differentiation can be included in your full version of the unit.