

NAPLAN ACTIVITIES: Year 7

These resources are intended to support teachers and schools as they prepare for the NAPLAN English Reading test for Year 7. They do not and are not intended to reflect the exact format or nature of the NAPLAN tests.

Experienced NSW English teacher and marker Nerida Wayland has composed the following resources for Red Room Poetry.

UNIT 1: THE SCHOOL TEACHER

The School Teacher

Elizabeth Allen

for Ben Hazlett and Norfolk Island Central School

The showering, brushing of teeth, careful straightening of hair into sharp smooth planes gives her order and containment like certain yoga poses. She removes the odd eyebrow hair, which

grows outside the row like a weed. She bends to water each plant individually. She visits the local beautician. The first hairs waxed off her leg leave a long clean strip like a runway. They

discuss yesterday's plane crash – it ran out of fuel and went into the water near Headstone, only half had time to get out their life jackets – she thinks of them in the cold dark, that wide

trough of panic. Her fingernails are buffed into neat pink shells and her careful makeup presents a front as solid as Captain Cook's Monument. She wonders what it would

feel like to discover an island. Who will remember her flat little life, its 50 minute segments? She stands in front of another class and is struck by the acceptance of

imperfection which has crept up like the formation of wrinkles. She used to enjoy stuffing little heads full of information until they were bursting like suitcases. Her expectations have been replaced

by a pervasive feeling she has been let down by something or someone. She has forgotten hope – how it feels to rush headlong into the future: a plane as it lands, the brakes straining,

pushing out, pushing through

1. The poem is about:

- A. A school teacher who is retiring
- B. A school teacher who was in a plane crash and feels traumatised
- C. A school teacher who likes to look her best
- D. A school teacher who no longer feels satisfied with her job

2. The word 'containment' means:

- A. Keeping something under control
- B. Packing something up neatly
- C. Keeping your balance
- D. Giving someone a purpose

3. 'She removes the odd eyebrow hair, which / grows outside the row like a weed' is an example of:

- A. Metaphor
- B. Allusion
- C. Symbolism
- D. Simile

4. This image shows the reader that:

- A. She wants well manicured eyebrows
- B. She is very vain
- C. She is a precise, ordered person who dislikes anything out of place
- D. She is relaxed and embraces her natural features

5. What do '50 minute segments' refer to?

- A. The teacher's age
- B. The amount of minutes in a school lesson
- C. The amount of years she has been teaching
- D. The amount of students she sees in a day

6. The word 'stuffing' is an example of:

- A. Colloquial language
- B. Formal language
- C. Emotive language
- D. Persuasive language

7. Which of the following lines shows the reader that, although her appearance is perfect, inside she feels very different?

- A. Her careful makeup presents a front as solid as Captain Cook's monument
- B. She visits the local beautician
- C. She thinks of them in the cold dark
- D. Her expectations have been replaced

8. 'She stands in front of another class.'

The use of the word 'another' in this extract suggests:

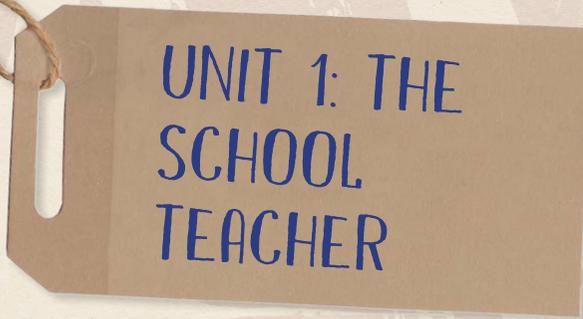
- A. She has taught for many years
- B. She can't remember which class it was
- C. She can't be bothered to remember individual student's names
- D. She feels like all the classes are becoming the same for her and she resents them

9. Why does the poet use the image of the plane in the poem?

- A. It is symbolic of her loss of control, emotion and freedom in her life
- B. It is symbolic of her tragic circumstances
- C. It is symbolic of her desire to take a holiday
- D. It is symbolic of her own panic

10. The mood of this poem is:

- A. Angry
- B. Optimistic
- C. Apologetic
- D. Discontented



UNIT 1: THE
SCHOOL
TEACHER

Pre-Reading Activity: Similes and Metaphors

1. Write the various similes and metaphors from the poem on strips of cardboard and then cut them in half.

E.g. The acceptance of imperfection that has crept up [CUT HERE] like the formation of wrinkles.

You will need to double up on examples as there are not enough similes and metaphors in the poem for every student to have a different example.

2. Distribute one half of a simile/metaphor to each student.

Students will have a couple of minutes to find the person with the other half of their simile/metaphor. They will need to talk to other students, see what image they have, work out if their two images work together and discuss the order the images are placed in, to create an effective and relevant comparison.

3. Read the completed similes/metaphors to the class.

Have they made the right choice? If not, they swap places to find their appropriate partner.

4. In pairs, students answer the following questions and complete their own poem:

- Is your example a simile or a metaphor? How do you know?
- What idea/attitude/emotion is conveyed through your example?
- Use your simile/metaphor to compose a free verse poem with your partner. You must either begin or end your poem with this comparison.

Teaching Strategies

Look

Class discussion: What do you notice about the structure of the poem? Look at the layout of the words and lines. Discuss lineation and the qualities of a free verse poem.

Listen

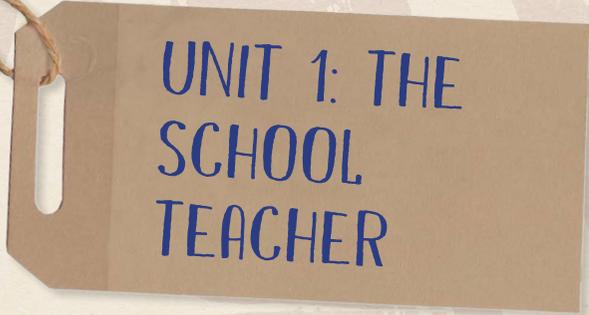
Read the poem to the class. Ask students to write what the main idea of the poem is in ONE sentence. Brainstorm ideas on the board and discuss what this shows about the way we read and understand poetry.

Think

1. Using different colour highlighters, students are to highlight any words or images about the teacher's external appearance with one colour and highlight her internal thoughts or feelings with the other colour.
2. Draw a table on the board with the headings 'Internal' and 'External' and invite students up one at a time to record a point they have highlighted under the appropriate heading.
3. Once the table is complete students write a one page reflection answering the question: How does the school teacher's physical appearance contrast with her inner feelings and thoughts? Why do you think this is?

Answers to Questions (p.1-2)

1: A, 2: A, 3: D, 4: C, 5: B, 6: A, 7: A, 8: D, 9: A, 10: D.



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UNIT 2: THE HAIRCUT

The Haircut Stephen Herrick

Aunt Alice arrives, as usual,
with lamingtons and demands
to 'clean this, tidy that'.
But today carries scissors,
and we know her intention.
Keith sits on the back stairs
with a dessert bowl on his head,
eyes closed,
and Aunt Alice
cutting,
swift as an executioner,
every hair that falls lower
than the bowl.

'Finished!'

Keith walks inside
like a defeated soldier
with his helmet still on.

'Harry. Next.'

I fake injury,
lice,

dizzy spells

but Aunt Alice can't be fooled.

I sit on the stairs.
eyes shut, listening to the clip clip
of scissors

but only hearing
the laughter and shouts
tomorrow at school
of

'Helmet-head Hodby!'

firing across the battlefield
we call a playground.

'Helmet-head Hodby!'

1. The 'I' in the poem is referring to:

- A. Aunt Alice
- B. Keith
- C. Harry
- D. The executioner

2. Which of the following events are in the correct sequence in which they occur in the poem?

- A. Aunt Alice arrives, cuts Harry's hair, cuts Keith's hair, the boys go to school and are teased.
- B. Aunt Alice arrives, cuts Keith's hair, Harry tries to avoid having his hair cut, Harry's hair is cut.
- C. The boys eat lamingtons, Aunt Alice cuts their hair, they walk around wearing dessert bowls on their heads.
- D. Aunt Alice arrives, cuts Harry's hair, Keith tries to avoid having his hair cut, Keith's hair is cut.

3. The structure of the poem is:

- A. Divided into equal stanzas
- B. One long stanza with a set rhyming pattern
- C. Free verse with no set rhyming pattern or stanzas
- D. A sonnet

4. Aunt Alice 'cutting, swift as an executioner' is an example of:

- A. Simile
- B. Metaphor
- C. Rhyme
- D. Assonance

5. This poetic technique adds meaning to the poem, as it suggests:

- A. She takes a long time to cut their hair
- B. She tries to kill them
- C. She is quick, skilful and ruthless
- D. She is a professional hairdresser

6. By referring to the playground as 'the battlefield' Harry suggests:

- A. This poem was written during a war
- B. He likes to pretend he is a soldier and play war games at lunchtime
- C. His life is in danger
- D. The playground can be a place of conflict and aggression

7. Aunt Alice's brief one-word commands, 'Harry. Next', convey that she is:

- A. In a rush to get home
- B. Authoritative and doesn't waste time
- C. Cranky and mean
- D. Tired and frustrated

8. Which line best describes Keith's helpless reaction to his haircut:

- A. Like a defeated soldier
- B. Eyes closed
- C. Hemet-head Hodby
- D. Keith sits on the back stairs

9. What effect does the sound and repetition of 'clip clip' create?

- A. It tells the reader what he can hear
- B. It shows the reader that he is having his hair cut
- C. It conveys the freedom he now feels with short hair
- D. It emphasises Aunt Alice's disregard for his plight and his dread at the teasing that will occur at school

10. Harry's attitude towards Aunt Alice is:

- A. Admiration
- B. Neutrality
- C. Apprehension
- D. Affection



UNIT 2: THE
HAIRCUT

Pre-Reading Activity: Character Portrait

Students are to choose an important person from their childhood. They are to brainstorm as many words as they can in one minute that they relate to this person (their personality, appearance, influence, etc).

The aim is for students to create a portrait of them in a free verse poem. Guide students by reading out each instruction, line-by-line, and give them time to write something down. Read aloud the following prompts to guide their composition:

- Title: the name of their chosen person
- Line one: Three adjectives to describe this person
- Line two: A simile to describe them
- Line three: What do they sound like?
- Line four: What do they smell like?
- Line five: What place/setting do you associate them with?
- Line six: What kind of weather represents them?
- Line seven: A metaphor to describe them
- Line eight: One word that sums them up to finish

Teaching Strategies

Look

Class discussion: What do you notice about the structure of the poem? Look at the layout of the words and lines. Discuss lineation and the qualities of a free verse poem.

Listen

1. Read the poem together, allocating the direct speech parts to students. Get them to adopt the tone they think Aunt Alice and the taunting students in the playground would use. What impression do we get of Aunt Alice from her dialogue?
2. Draw students' attention to the sound devices in the poem (i.e. alliteration, onomatopoeia, direct speech). How do they add to your understanding of the poem (the subject matter, characters, central themes, setting, etc.)?

Think

1. Students summarise what happens in the poem in no more than 20 words.
2. Students draw one symbol that represents Aunt Alice and one symbol that represents Harry. What does each symbol represent about each character? When you compare the symbols, what do they reveal about Aunt Alice and Harry's relationship?

3. Students fill in the table below:

Technique	Example/s	Effect
Simile		
Metaphor		
Repetition	'but' 'helmet head Hodby'	
Onomatopoeia		
Alliteration		
Direct Speech		
First-Person Perspective		

Answers to Questions (p. 4-5)

1: C, 2: B, 3: C, 4: A, 5: C, 6: D, 7: B, 8: A, 9: D, 10: C.



UNIT 2: THE
HAIRCUT