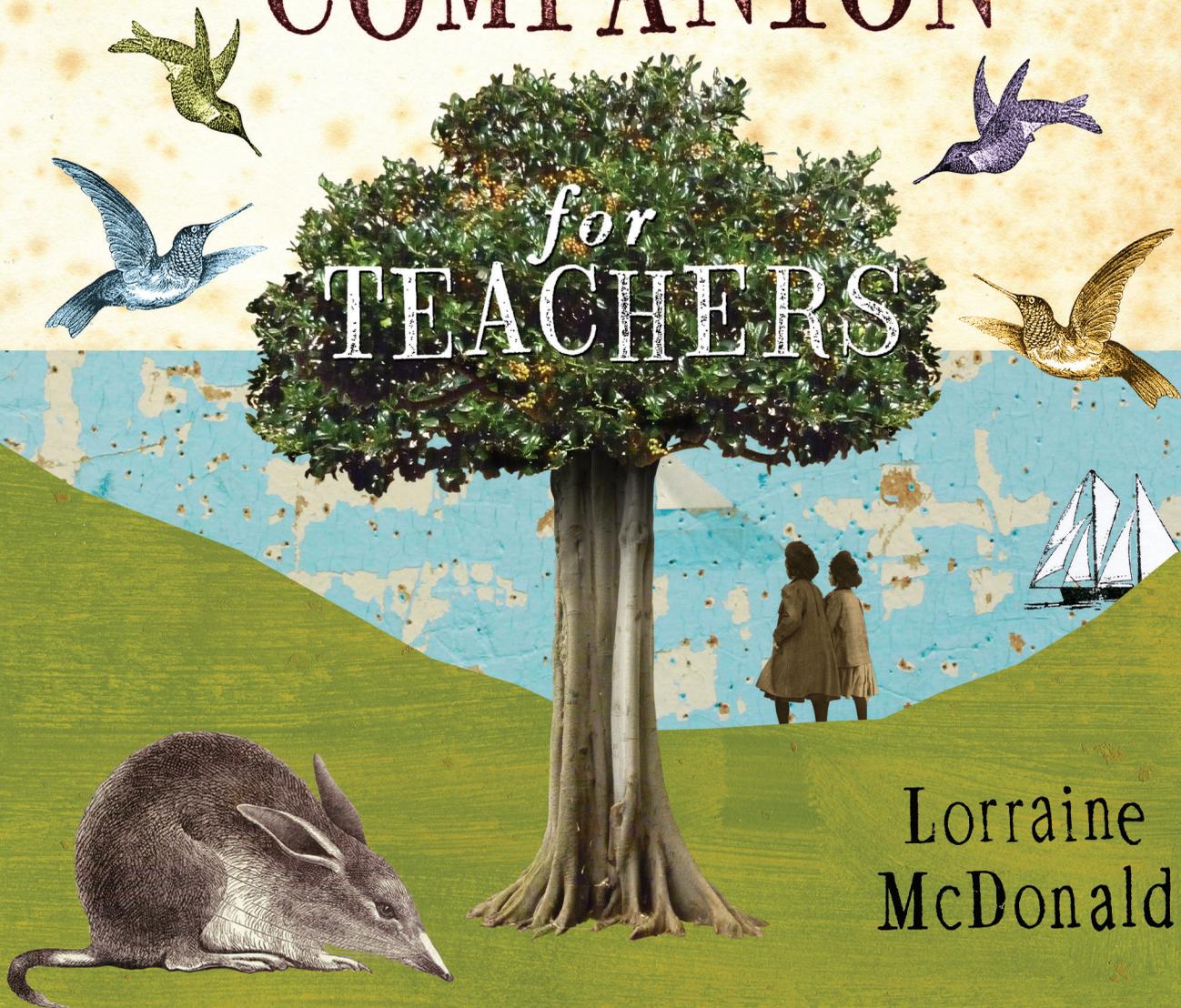


A LITERATURE COMPANION

for
TEACHERS



Lorraine
McDonald

2ND EDITION



PETAA
PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHING
ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

115



A LITERATURE COMPANION FOR TEACHERS

BY LORRAINE McDONALD

SECOND EDITION

*'The young of birds are fed with the blossoms of trees
whereas the young of humans are fed with words.'*

Samoan saying

DEDICATION

This edition is dedicated to Astrid Ella McDonald, my tiny granddaughter, who already loves her books.

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Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA)
Laura St, Newtown, NSW 2042, Australia
PO Box 3106, Marrickville Metro, NSW 2204
Tel: (02) 8020 3900
Fax: (02) 8020 3933
Email: info@petaa.edu.au
Website: www.petaa.edu.au

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FOREWORD

A companion is someone who travels with you; a guide who knows how to prepare you for the journey and what to highlight on the way. A trusted companion is someone whose opinion you value so much you return to seek her/his advice. So it is with the second edition of *The literature companion for teachers* that we are asked to revisit the work and learn from new additions and revisions, which enhance the content. The core purpose of the book remains as it was, a text that helps teachers explore the world of children's literature and discover the potential of these great works of creativity. However, updates since the last edition provide further impetus to carry out close readings of both fiction and non-fiction books and reconsider the place of digital texts.

Lorraine knows well that time poor teachers need support in choosing great texts. She understands that teachers first need to be readers before they can be reading teachers (Commeyras et al., 2003). *The literature companion for teachers* provides an introduction to ways of reading texts that helps teachers invest their teaching with extra knowledge about how texts are written. It sets out a literary landscape of classic, current and future literary forms for readers to explore, providing practical advice along the way. Written by an academic who speaks with the authority of many years of experience working with pre-service teachers in Australia, the US and the UK, the book offers a clear lens through which readers can view familiar scenes and see things differently.

A teacher said to me recently that she builds student engagement with reading by encouraging them to 'harvest' ideas. *The literature companion* enables all teachers to have a similar experience. First it recommends reading literature for enjoyment. Then teachers are exhorted to reread and appreciate authors' and illustrators' craft as they create literary texts. The *Companion* recommends looking at the language in literature through analysis of text samples, providing exercises for teachers and students to complete. Education systems that aim to reduce children's early reading experience to skills and drills take the focus away from learning to

read as meaning-making, personal response, critical appreciation and well-informed evaluation. Teachers who listen to the advice of *The literature companion* will place rich reading of literary texts at the heart of their English teaching.

As I said in the first edition, here is a book that understands the imperative of teaching children to read for reading's sake as much as for what it can teach about reading and writing. It is an important book that aligns itself with the four Literature strands from the national English Curriculum as well as the Four Resources Model of reading. The predominately Australian titles have been updated in the new edition to include award-winning picturebooks, poetry, digital texts and the additional category of literary non-fiction.

The structure of the book is intended to support teachers in their classroom work with literature and literacy. The concepts could also inform reading groups for teachers to stimulate the kind of book talk set up for students. Teachers could choose a children's book they want to read with their students and use the templates and scaffolds in the book to prepare some notes, ready for discussion with their peers. As they shared their questions and discoveries over time, each teacher would become part of a reading community (Cremin et al., 2009). Thus this *Companion* supports a powerful – and enjoyable – way to build professional content knowledge about literature.

Associate Professor Alyson Simpson
Faculty of Arts and Social Science,
University of Sydney

Commeyras, M., Bisplinghoff, B.S. & Olson, J. (2003). *Teachers as readers: perspectives on the importance of reading in teachers' classrooms and lives*. Newark: International Reading Association.

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S. & Safford, K. (2009). Teachers as readers: building communities of readers. *Literacy*, 43 (1), 11–19.

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I want to thank all of the students I've taught at Australian Catholic University, Strathfield Campus and at the University of New England, as well as the teachers I work with. I have learned so much from your questions, challenges and responses. This book is the result of everything you've all taught me.

Acknowledgement is due to copyright holders and publishers who have granted their permission to use their quality literature (see p. 195) for a full list.

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Lorraine McDonald

PART ONE

THE ART AND CRAFT OF LITERARY TEXTS



CHAPTER 1



Literature for children and young adolescents

The Australian Curriculum: English defines literature this way:

The term 'literature' includes literary texts from across a range of historical and cultural contexts that are valued for their form and style and are recognised as having enduring or artistic value. While the nature of what constitutes literary texts is dynamic and evolving, they are seen as having personal, social, cultural and aesthetic value and potential for enriching students' scope of experience.

The appreciation of literature, Key ideas, Australian Curriculum: English

THE VALUE OF NARRATIVE

Literature and narrative hold privileged positions in our educational culture. That narrative is 'a primary act of mind' is a well-known observation (Hardy, 1977). It is through narratives, Hardy argues, that we live our lives: 'For we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative ... we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future' (p. 13). Hardy contends that narrative is the core of our lived experience, as our human way of knowing who we are (see also Arizpe, Farrell & McAdam, 2013).

The French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes affirms the primacy of narrative this way:

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting, ... stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation ... Narrative is present in every age, every place, every society; it begins with the very history of mankind ... it is simply there, like life itself ...

Barthes, 1977, p. 79

Here, the narrative form is seen to permeate every aspect of our lives, in words, images and speech – and has been part of our nature since the beginning of human history.

Narrative re-imagines the world for young people and, in so doing, suggests ways of thinking about the attitudes, values and beliefs of the culture presented in the text. Clare Bradford, an Australian scholar of international renown, examines what kind of society, behaviours and attitudes our contemporary narratives are imagining for the future. Her studies (2007, 2008) reveal that many stories of race and immigration reproduce Anglocentric, colonial beliefs and attitudes, which become 'naturalised' and 'normal' ways of thinking in contemporary children's literature. Narratives have the power to be subtle 'game-changers' in how the beliefs and attitudes they espouse contribute to the ways young people form their identities: teaching awareness of how narratives re-imagine the world is crucial to the way literature is approached for Australia's future citizens.

Other Australian scholars such as Alyson Simpson have highlighted the need for students to be 'excited about reading', which encompasses much more than just 'learning to read' (2008, p. 6). She states, 'the effect of ... staged learning [as in reading programs] is that it kills enthusiasm for reading' (2008, p. 6). Students need to choose and read a wide range of quality literary texts. When supported by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable adult, their learning and excitement will merge, as this is 'how texts teach what readers

learn' (Meek, 1988, p. 1). However, as Maureen Walsh reminds us, today's digital technologies create 'the challenge of maintaining students' motivation to continue to read books and to engage in sustained reading of ... literature' (2011, p. 7).

In Australia, as in other Western nations, the narrative form is one of the text types that students learn to compose from a very early age, despite being the most complex for young people to write. The comparatively simple narrative structure students are asked to follow is intended to support developing writers to use language in imaginative ways. While the simple structure is evident in quality narrative/literary texts, it is somewhat reductive when equated to the nuanced complexities of an award-winning

novel or picturebook for young people. When teachers share quality narratives with their students they offer models for what is possible so that together they can consider how the writing techniques and language use offers insights into what counts as a quality 'story'.

It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations – something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own.

Katherine Paterson (1995)

THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Literature has always been used as reading material in Australian schools, and teachers are the interpretative authorities on literary texts; the meaning of the text is filtered through the way they talk about it. Teachers mediate the text to their students and shape it through the kinds of questions they ask. Longstanding Australian research points to teachers' 'running commentary' (Luke, de Castell & Luke, 1983, p.118) – the text is interpreted to students in particular ways, whether intended or not. Typically, students are 'asked to look through the text into the story, and through talk into the world' (Baker, 1991, p.176). Thus both the literary text and students' own knowledge of the world become resources for their interpretative responses (Heap, 1985).

Guided talk about books is an important strategy teachers use to develop comprehension of literary texts. Daly (2012) notes the need for frequent opportunities for 'talk around text' to enable students to understand structural connections within texts leading to comprehension of more complex reading material (also see Munro 2011; Lemke, 1988; Chambers, 1985). Daly's (2011) research has found significant correlations between the amount of complexity in students' spoken language and their reading comprehension scores.

One way of thinking about guided talk is as a literary conversation. Conversations can be teacher-led class discussions or be peer-led, as in the well-known routine of literature circles (Daniels, 1994/2002, 2006; Barone & Barone, 2016; Helgeson, 2017). Often good conversations can begin by asking whether students were puzzled by any aspect of a picturebook or a chapter and/or can see any patterns in the text (Chambers, 1994) – which is a variation on the more obvious 'what did you like/dislike about the story' question. However, research has found that students do not notice 'the author's craft or how authors constructed their works' (Conlon & Jasmine, 2017, p. 6). It therefore becomes necessary for teachers to refine the kinds of questions they ask for higher order comprehension and interpretation.

CLOSE READING

More refined questions can invite students 'to examine the deep structures of a piece of text' (Fisher & Frey, 2012) in a 'close reading' of the focus text. Close reading is when teachers plan 'multiple interactions with text to examine what it says, how the author has said it and what it

means' (Lehman & Roberts, 2014). Teachers direct their students' gaze to the craft of the text: the staging, vocabulary, grammatical choices and reader–author relationships, for example, and guide them to an interpretation and evaluation of the text based on evidence (see *Australian Curriculum: English v8.3*). This level of comprehension is the essence of the General Capability *Critical and Creative Thinking* discussed below. Research has found that young students respond positively to an awareness of narrative strategies, the use of language and the (often subtle) contexts and discourses of history, culture, race, society and gender that are present (McDonald, 1999, 2003). This book is intended to provide support and extension for teachers who may lack confidence about their depth of literary and 'linguistic subject knowledge' (Love & Sandiford, 2016, p. 205) to guide such close readings.

MENTOR TEXTS

A further aspect of close reading is the selection of appropriate texts. As Fisher & Frey (2012, p.180) note, 'Not all text warrants this kind of attention. There's no reason to do a close reading of an easily understood and simply organised piece of text.' Thus, teachers can guide students to read more straightforward texts as independent reading and, in the early years, for phonics instruction. However, a text or excerpt that is more complex in its language, structure and themes – selected because many of the students may not be able to read and/or comprehend it without support – could be deliberately chosen for close attention as a class community of readers. The teacher's knowledge as the interpretative authority then becomes valuable: he/she scaffolds students' close reading towards deep understanding of how the text is constructed to project its meanings and engage its audience.

What counts as a mentor text will vary depending on the maturity and reading ability of the students. Often apparently simple picturebooks have deeper levels of meaning in their patterning of words and illustrations (as discussed in [Chapter 12](#)). These may offer an entry point for introducing complex notions of audience engagement and positioning for more mature and proficient readers. These ideas can then be applied to stretches of prose and dialogue which do not have illustrative support.

Mentor texts therefore offer exemplars of complex language which stretch students' reading capabilities. As well, mentor texts provide models for writing, as 'the process of using a mentor text ... can involve first teaching students how to close read for qualities of good writing, and then teaching students how to emulate those qualities in their own work' (Conlan & Jasmine, 2017, p. 4; Culham, 2014; Gallagher, 2012; Marchetti & O'Dell, 2015). As students read closely they begin to read 'like a writer', building knowledge over time about how different authors' select vocabulary and grammar to convey particular effects and relationships to serve different purposes.

FOUR RESOURCES MODEL OF READING

The Four Resources model of reading is now a familiar and valuable framework. It supports teachers in broadening the kinds of questions and tasks they engage students in. This model is well-reported and the nature of the model as 'inter-related and independent' (Luke & Freebody, 1999) is well-known. To review briefly, breaking the code of the text (*codebreaker*) typically includes identification of letters, sounds, words and phrases. Other kinds of codebreaking includes identifying literary elements, evaluative language, associated words etc. Alongside codebreaking are the essential resources of comprehending the text's patterns of meaning (*text participant*), its social purpose and how this is achieved in language (*text user*), and the ways of thinking about the world that it embeds (*text analyst/critical reading*). These essential resources underpin the ability to interpret and evaluate texts.

The model is widely applied in teacher resource texts, for example, the PETAA publication *Text next: new resources for literacy learning* (Healey & Honan, 2004). Online and various State curriculum resources give good explanations and related tasks; two Australian sites are listed in the box below:

▮ Making sense of literacy

www.alea.edu.au/documents/item/53

▮ MyRead Strategies for teaching reading in the middle years

www.myread.org/what.htm

THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH V.8.3

www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english

The *Australian Curriculum: English* has had several iterations since its introduction in 2010, with the latest version 8.3 introduced in December 2016. Its Rationale states that it ‘helps students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience’. One of its Aims is to ensure that students ‘develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature’.

Since the introduction of the national curriculum, different States have extended the content to create distinct versions to meet their specific educational needs. For example, NSW has the *NSW English K–10 Syllabus*, with specific Outcomes having direct web links to the *Australian Curriculum: English* codes. Thus, the national curriculum is the core, and it is this content which is tested in national testing programs such as NAPLAN.

The national English curriculum includes Key Ideas, with six subsections, all of which have relevance for this second edition. These Key Ideas are unravelled in the three Strands, and associated Sub-strands and threads of the English Content Structure. While these strands are listed as separate domains, success in one strand cannot be achieved without engaging both other strands in the teaching/learning experiences. This is apparent in the Sub-strands and threads presented in [Table 1.1](#).

This book focuses on the central Literature strand, positioned as the lynchpin for the national English curriculum and the nexus for the Language and Literacy strands. The book reflects the interrelationship of these strands, sub-strands and threads with language and literacy concepts an integral part of each chapter.

‘Each strand interacts with and enriches the other strands in creative and flexible ways, the fabric of the curriculum being strengthened by the threads within each sub-strand.’ (*Australian Curriculum: English: Structure*).

This book makes explicit links to the curriculum’s Literature Content Descriptions across the Year levels F–8. Look for the [blue text](#) in each chapter, which suggest Content Descriptions relevant to the specific focus (though not all options could be included, repetition has been avoided). The Content Descriptions are presented in their code form, with a sub-strand number to indicate the specific Descriptor followed by the Year to which each applies. For example, the three codes below are listed as useful Content Descriptions for working with synonyms when building vocabulary (see [Chapter 8](#)).

ACELA1512 Y5 Australian Curriculum: English: Language Content Description 1512, Year 5

ACELT1581 Y1: Australian Curriculum: English: Literature Content Description 1581, Year 1

ACELA1437 F: Australian Curriculum: English: Language Content Description 1437, Foundation

The codes can be typed into the search tab on the Australian Curriculum website and the details will appear with the Elaborations for that Content Description.

TABLE 1.1 CONTENT STRUCTURE: STRANDS, SUB-STRANDS AND THREADS IN THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH

STRANDS	LANGUAGE (CODE ACELA) <i>knowing about the English language</i>	LITERATURE (CODE ACELT) <i>understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature</i>	LITERACY (CODE ACELY) <i>expanding the repertoire of English usage</i>
SUB-STRANDS & THREADS	Language variation and change language variation and change	Literature and context how texts reflect the context of culture and situation in which they are created	Texts in context texts and the contexts in which they are used
	Language for interaction language for social interactions evaluative language	Responding to literature personal responses to the ideas, characters and viewpoints in texts expressing preferences and evaluating texts	Interacting with others listening and speaking interactions (purposes and contexts) listening and speaking interactions (skills) oral presentations
	Text structure and organisation purpose, audience and structures of different types of texts text cohesion punctuation concepts of print and screen	Examining literature features of literary texts language devices in literary texts	Interpreting, analysing and evaluating purpose and audience reading processes comprehension strategies analysing and evaluating texts
	Expressing and developing ideas sentences and clause level grammar word level grammar visual language vocabulary spelling	Creating literature creating literary texts experimentation and adaptation	Creating texts creating texts editing handwriting use of software
	Phonics and word knowledge phonological and phonemic awareness alphabet and phonic knowledge spelling		

GENERAL CAPABILITIES IN THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH

The curriculum specifies seven *General Capabilities* that are inherent to knowledge about and comprehension of literary texts. As a capability, *Literacy* has ‘a direct role’ as one of the three strands in the English curriculum where ‘expanding the repertoire of English usage’ underpins English teaching. As the Literacy general capability states: ‘Students learn about how language works in the Language strand, and gradually develop and apply this knowledge in the Literacy strand. As the Literature strand requires responding, examining, interpreting and evaluating literary texts it is the major resource, within English, for applications of knowledge about language and literacy use.’ The suggestions for teaching opportunities in each chapter are a direct reference to developing literacy capabilities.

While the *Numeracy* capability is less foregrounded in a focus on fiction, the curriculum states that it is embedded when young students ‘explore rhythms, syllables and sound patterns in stories, rhymes, songs and poems’ (see [Chapter 11, Poetry](#)). Numeracy is embedded in non-fiction literary texts too, where students examine ‘analytical images like figures, tables, diagrams, maps and graphs, and how they affect and complement verbal information in factual and persuasive texts’.

Examples of non-fiction literacy texts are included throughout this edition and can be explored beyond the language focus in this book. Understanding visual and multimodal images can include aspects of the Numeracy capability (see [Chapter 12, Reading and viewing picturebooks](#)).

Digital narratives are a major source in English for developing the Information and Communication (ICT) capability. [Chapter 13](#) explains multimodal affordances in quality digital stories and introduces examples of quality digital literature. Throughout the chapters, it is suggested that apps are recommended as ways for students to apply their literature knowledge through aspects of ICT.

The capability *Critical and Creative Thinking* is fundamental to each chapter in this book. Close reading is the major literature teaching strategy presented throughout and every chapter presents mentor texts, models and teaching ideas for how to develop ‘close reading’. A new chapter, [Chapter 10, Evaluating literary texts](#), specifically unpacks the language of ‘opinions, points of view and unstated assumptions embedded in texts’, so teachers and students can develop evidence-based justification and responses to both fiction and non-fiction texts. Further, creative responses to text examples are supported by asking students to apply the literary, language and literacy knowledge explained in the chapter.

The very nature of literary texts, both fiction and non-fiction, is to contribute to students’ Personal and Social capability. As noted early in this Introduction, ‘narrative is a primary act of mind’. In so doing, narrative ‘re-imagines the world for young people and ... suggests ways of thinking about the attitudes, values and beliefs of the culture presented in the text’. Literary non-fiction enhances the reader’s world in how it documents ‘factual material with consideration given to imaginative presentation, interpretation and variation of style’ (CBCA, 2017). Attention to excellence in the quality of content, design, language use and aesthetic appeal are all elements of the mentor texts in this book. A thoughtful selection of a variety of literary texts offers crucial opportunities for students to expand their personal and social capabilities.

Similarly, *Ethical Understanding* is enriched when students are guided to probe both the imagined and lived experiences, behaviours and judgements, in fiction and non-fiction. [Chapter 10’s](#) focus on how to access the language of inclusion and exclusion, and observe bias and objectivity leads to a deeper consideration of the ethical viewpoint presented.

Several chapters develop principles for *Intercultural Understanding*. [Chapter 3](#) presents ways of probing different historical, cultural and social contexts. Other chapters explore ways of interpreting

and analysing authors' ideas and positions in the close readings modelled for each of the mentor texts. Again, a careful selection of the texts you use in the classroom is fundamental for engaging students in intercultural understanding.

HOW THIS BOOK IS STRUCTURED

PART 1 THE ART AND CRAFT OF LITERARY TEXTS

CHAPTER 2 TYPES OF LITERARY TEXTS takes a general look at the different potentials of literary texts, including picturebooks, novels, literary genres, graphic novels and manga.

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE AND CONTEXT demonstrates ways of analysing historical, cultural and social contexts and their effect on aspects of critical theory.

CHAPTER 4 RESPONDING TO LITERATURE applies well-established research to observe some of the strategies writers employ to involve their audience.

CHAPTER 5 EXAMINING LITERATURE demonstrates how distinctive elements give narrative its characteristic structure.

PART 2 CREATING LITERARY TEXTS

CHAPTER 6 COMPOSING DIALOGUE shows how dialogue constructs relationships and can lead to a 'show, not tell' narrative.

CHAPTER 7 COMPOSING DESCRIPTION shows how descriptive details can be composed and constructed to enhance students' literary writing.

CHAPTER 8 BUILDING COHESION THROUGH VOCABULARY looks at the crucial role of word associations to create cohesive and coherent literary texts.

CHAPTER 9 USING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN LITERATURE works as a glossary which explains different types of figurative language, from alliteration and hyperbole to imagery and metaphor, in narratives.

CHAPTER 10 EVALUATING LITERARY TEXTS demonstrates how to guide students towards higher order critical thinking about authors' perspectives and how they are positioned as readers to accept those perspectives.

PART 3 EXTENDING LITERARY KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 11 POETRY displays examples of different poetic techniques and suggests approaches that help tease out the language that is evidence for the poet's use of imagination and projection of emotion.

CHAPTER 12 VIEWING AND READING PICTUREBOOKS emphasises simple ways of noting the relationship between the verbal and visual – multimodal – features of picturebooks and demonstrates how visual elements construct meaning.

CHAPTER 13 LITERATURE IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT focuses on the most recent form of literary texts. It surveys what counts as quality digital narratives and explains features of this constantly changing environment.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS SECOND EDITION

The purpose of this book has not changed: it is intended as a reference book to enhance practising and pre-service teachers' knowledge about how literature may be responded to, examined, interpreted, analysed, evaluated and created. It presents literary writing as both an art and a craft and explores the craft of writers' artistry.

The book offers explanations, interpretations and examples for each of the four Literature strands from the national English curriculum, as well as exploring related aspects such as poetry, picturebooks and digital narratives. For this edition, literary non-fiction texts have been included, usually selected from a recent Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Eve Pownall Award for Information Books Notables Short List (CBCA 2017). These information texts are not typical 'school texts'. As Mallam (2014, p. 9) notes:

Information picture books rely heavily on eye-catching, detailed illustrations, and a varied design and layout intended to make complex concepts and ideas more easily accessible. By encouraging children to read in a non-linear fashion, these texts mimic, to some extent, the browsing and random reading practices of hypertexts and digital interactivity of games and web pages.

Each chapter presents exemplars of quality literature, with many recent texts included for this edition. The quality literature texts and excerpts are selected as possible mentor texts for teachers.



The chapters offer models for teaching the literary content and opportunities for teaching and learning experiences, noted with this icon.

These emphasise the cooperative 'book talk', and 'close reading' (Fisher & Frey, 2012) to seek evidence from the text. As before, across the chapters there has been a consistent focus on how language constructs meanings in texts. This focus is now foregrounded as an explicit theme across the *Key Ideas* in the national English curriculum:

From *Language features, visual features and text structures*

The choices that authors make in language features, visual features and text structures work together to define the type of text and create certain meanings and effects which shape the way that texts are interpreted, analysed and evaluated by their audiences.

From *The appreciation of literature*

...to engage students in examining, evaluating and discussing texts in increasingly sophisticated and informed 'literary' ways ... emphasises a close analysis of literary works and the key ideas and values on which they are based; for example, the detailed stylistic study of differing styles of literary work

From *Literacy is language in use*

...emphasises ... an expanding vocabulary and grasp of grammatical and textual patterns sufficient to understand and learn from texts encountered in and out of school

A new chapter, **Chapter 10** Evaluating literary texts, has been added as a response to the *Australian Curriculum: English* Sub-strands of Evaluative language, Expressing preferences and evaluating texts and, from Year 6, Analysing and evaluating texts.

Throughout the book the teaching sequence of identify, describe and explain is promoted. This sequence is intended to ensure students move beyond codebreaking to deeper interpretation and analysis. The patterns of language choices which construe the meaning under focus in the chapter (for example, types of texts, characterisation, vocabulary) need to be identified, the 'job' or function of the language patterns in the text described, and the effect of the language on the

reader explained (Macken-Horarik et al., 2015; Love & Sandiford, 2016). This sequence provides a straightforward order for class attention to texts.

Finally, the most recent form of literary texts, literature in a digital environment, is the focus of **Chapter 13** – not as an afterthought, but because it extends knowledge presented in the previous chapters. Written by renowned researchers in the field of digital literacy Jessica Mantei, Kylie Lipscombe and Lisa Kervin, it surveys what counts as quality digital texts and explains features of this constantly changing environment.

For this edition the chapter on Cross Curriculum Priorities will be available online in 2018 and resources will be developed and consistently updated. Website references will also be available here. All supplementary material will appear online in the specific ‘Book Extras’ section on the PETAA website (petaa.edu.au), where you can locate them in the Publications section (<https://tinyurl.com.y9e5btet>).

While we encourage using ICT to extend your teaching opportunities we have avoided suggesting specific apps. This field is forever evolving and so we recommend teachers and students use what is available and appropriate in their classrooms. We have indicated within this book teaching opportunities where apps can be used to extend students’ experiences.

USING THIS BOOK

The book is intended as a ‘companion’ that teachers can revisit to clarify particular points and find relevant examples of questions and suggestions for teaching opportunities. The concept of mentor texts and close reading are integral to the approach taken by the book. It is not by any means a ‘Compendium’, that is, a ‘complete’ response to all aspects of literature. It is an overview of what counts as literary fiction and non-fiction texts and what may contribute to the development of students’ learning in this field. It is intended to inspire teachers to try some new approaches.

I am sure to have unknowingly omitted useful ideas. The paths I have taken have been influenced by my love of language and my delight in each new discovery of how authors creatively construct meaning through grammatical relationships. This attention to language is my way of making explicit what is often an implicit understanding of how literary texts work. For those not of a literary ‘bent’, I hope that the book offers practical insights into how literature is created and into the joy of discovering the artistry in the crafted, quality literary texts that teachers read with their students. For those who are lovers of literature fiction and non-fiction I hope that the book offers some fresh ways of welcoming the next generation into richer awareness and a lifelong pleasure in literary texts.