Literary devices
Stage 2

Overview

Purpose

This literacy teaching strategy supports teaching and learning for Stage 2 students across all key learning areas. It targets specific literacy skills and suggests a learning sequence to build skill development. Teachers can select individual tasks, or a sequence, and embed into their teaching and learning program according to their students' needs. While exemplar texts are provided throughout this resource, it is recommended that teachers select texts which are relevant to their students and curriculum.

Learning intention

Students will learn to identify literary devices in texts, analyse the effect and explore how it impacts the reader's understanding.

Syllabus outcome

The following teaching and learning strategies will assist in covering elements of the following outcomes:

- EN2-RECOM-01: reads and comprehends texts for wide purposes using knowledge of text structures and language, and by monitoring comprehension
- EN2-UARL-01: identifies and describes how ideas are represented in literature and strategically uses similar representations when creating texts

NSW English K-10 Syllabus (2022)

Success criteria

The following Year 3 NAPLAN item descriptors may guide teachers to develop success criteria for student learning.

- interprets the meaning of a simile in a narrative
- identifies the use of a literary device in an informative text
- understand how authors use language to influence the reader
- interpret the meaning of simple figurative language
- identify how authors use language to persuade readers

National Literacy Learning Progression guide

Understanding Texts (UnT6-UnT9)

Key: C=comprehension P=process V=vocabulary

UnT6

- identifies parts of text used to answer literal and inferential questions (P)
- interprets language devices (e.g. exaggeration or repetition) (V)
- interprets simple imagery (e.g. simile, onomatopoeia) (V)

UnT7

- interprets creative use of figurative language (e.g. metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia) (V)
- draws inferences and identifies supporting evidence in the text (C)

UnT8

- reads and views some moderately complex texts (see *Text complexity*) (C)
- draws inferences and verifies using text evidence (C)

UnT9

- analyses the use of language appropriate to different types of texts (e.g. compare the use of pun in imaginative and persuasive texts) (C)
- identifies language used to create tone or atmosphere (V)

National Literacy Learning Progression

Evidence base

- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2017). [Effective reading instruction in the early years of school](#), literature review.
- Konza, D. (2014). Teaching Reading: Why the "Fab Five" should be the "Big Six". Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39(12).
- Oakhill, J., Cain, K. & Elbro, C. (2015). Understanding and teaching reading comprehension: A handbook. Routledge.
- Quigley, A. (2020). Closing the reading gap. Routledge.
- Scarborough, H.S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickson (Eds.), Handbook for research in early literacy (pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

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Teaching strategies

Task	Appendices
Onomatopoeia	Appendix 1 - Onomatopoeia match and sort
	Appendix 2 - Examples of onomatopoeia
Senses and onomatopoeia	
Analogy	Appendix 3 – Analogy posters
Alliteration	
Personification	
Simile	Appendix 4 - Simile brainstorm map
	Appendix 5 - Identifying and interpreting similes in texts
Metaphor	
Imagery	Appendix 6 - Imagery: 'Lost in the snow'

Background information

Figurative language

Word groups/phrases used differently from the expected or everyday usage to express an idea in a non-literal way for a particular effect.

Alliteration

The recurrence, in close succession, of the same consonant sounds usually at the beginning of words. In 'ripe, red raspberry', the repetition of the 'r' sound creates a rich aural effect, suggesting the lusciousness of the fruit.

Metaphor

Linguistic – a figure of speech used for effect that implies one thing by referring to another.

Literary – an object, entity or situation that can be regarded as representing something else.

Onomatopoeia

A word that phonetically imitates or is indicative of the sound that it describes.

For example, bang, splash, oink, miaow.

Personification

Attributing human characteristics to abstractions such as love, things or animals.

See figurative language.

Simile

A figure of speech that compares the similar qualities of 2 different things. The comparison usually includes like, as or as if.

See figurative language.

Imagery

Use of figurative language to represent objects, characters, actions or ideas in such a way that they appeal to the senses of the reader or viewer.

Reference: English K-10 Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2022.

Where to next?

- Inference
- Vocabulary in context
- Exploring character

Overview of teaching strategies

Purpose

These literacy teaching strategies support teaching and learning from Stage 2 to Stage 5. They are linked to NAPLAN task descriptors, syllabus outcomes and literacy and numeracy learning progressions.

These teaching strategies target specific literacy and numeracy skills and suggest a learning sequence to build skill development. Teachers can select individual tasks or a sequence to suit their students.

Access points

The resources can be accessed from:

- NAPLAN App in Scout using the teaching strategy links from NAPLAN items
- NSW Department of Education Literacy and Numeracy website.

What works best

Explicit teaching practices involve teachers clearly explaining to students why they are learning something, how it connects to what they already know, what they are expected to do, how to do it and what it looks like when they have succeeded. Students are given opportunities and time to check their understanding, ask questions and receive clear, effective feedback.

This resource reflects the latest evidence base and can be used by teachers as they plan for explicit teaching.

Teachers can use classroom observations and other assessment information to make decisions about when and how they use this resource as they design teaching and learning sequences to meet the learning needs of their students.

Further support with What works best is available.

Differentiation

When using these resources in the classroom, it is important for teachers to consider the needs of all students, including Aboriginal and EAL/D learners.

EAL/D learners will require explicit English language support and scaffolding, informed by the EAL/D enhanced teaching and learning cycle and the student's phase on the EAL/D Learning Progression. Teachers can access information about supporting EAL/D learners and literacy and numeracy support specific to EAL/D learners.

Learning adjustments enable students with disability and additional learning and support needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. Teachers can use a range of adjustments to ensure a personalised approach to student learning.

Assessing and identifying high potential and gifted learners will help teachers decide which students may benefit from extension and additional challenge. Effective strategies and contributors to achievement for high potential and gifted learners helps teachers to identify and target areas for growth and improvement. A differentiation adjustment tool can be found on the High potential and gifted education website.

Using tasks across learning areas

This resource may be used across learning areas where it supports teaching and learning aligned with syllabus outcomes.

Literacy and numeracy are embedded throughout all syllabus documents as general capabilities. As the English and mathematics learning areas have a particular role in developing literacy and numeracy, NSW English and Mathematics syllabus outcomes aligned to literacy and numeracy skills have been identified.

Text selection

Example texts are used throughout this resource. Teachers can adjust activities to use texts which are linked to their unit of learning.

Further support with text selection can be found within the National Literacy Learning Progression Text complexity appendix.

The NESA website has additional information on text requirements within the NSW English syllabus.

Teaching strategies

Onomatopoeia

1. Onomatopoeia: Students are often familiar with words like Bam! Pow! Whack! It is also important for them to understand that onomatopoeia is using sound to enhance the text's description. For instance, "The spurting screaming tap wreaked havoc in the bathroom' sounds more interesting than 'the tap was leaking'. Some common examples include: buzzing, splash, thump, roar, rustling. Another example of onomatopoeia is the sound that an animal might make for example, oink, meow, woof, as well as sounds humans make: giggle, grunt, sigh, yell. Teacher models using these in a sentence and saying these aloud.
2. Students use Appendix 1 - Onomatopoeia match and sort to categorise types of onomatopoeia.
3. Students use Appendix 2 - Examples of onomatopoeia to find examples of onomatopoeia and explain the effect.

Analogy

1. Introduce the term 'analogy': A comparison demonstrating the similarities between two things, people or situations. It is a device to clarify an idea through a connection. Analogies are often used in persuading, explaining or arguing a point.
2. Discuss how authors use analogy to draw comparisons and have us make connections; this is a creative way to illustrate an idea without 'spelling it out' for the reader.
3. Discuss how we use our own experiences from our background knowledge to understand an analogy.
4. Display Appendix 3 – Analogy posters as a 'gallery walk'. Posters are displayed and students walk to each poster and add their ideas. Alternatively, students can work in pairs or small groups.
5. Share ideas with the class and discuss similarities and differences.
6. Invite students to create their own examples of analogies.

Senses and onomatopoeia

1. Students walk outside and find a space to sit and use their senses. Students are prompted by teacher: What can you smell? What can you see? What can you hear? What can you touch? What can you taste? Students write down a few words in response to each of the five senses.
2. Teacher can prompt with ideas. Can you hear the steady rhythm of cars in the distance? Can you smell the lasting scent of bushfire in the air?
3. Teacher and students return to the classroom and the teacher models sentences for the students to write using their five sense notes as a prompt. For example: One student has written I could see the cars on the busy road. The teacher would model onomatopoeia for this sentence. I could see the busy cars on the road zooming by and beeping at each other. Teacher should ask five different students for their observations until the teacher has provided an example for each of the five senses. Students can then be supported to try writing their own onomatopoeia sentences from their five senses observations.

Alliteration

1. Introduce alliteration as repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of words or within words. The words can be right next to each other or spaced out, and at least two words are needed for alliteration. A good example of alliteration is a tongue twister. Teacher could provide the students with a tongue twister as an example. Alliteration is often used in poetry to create a musical or rhythmic effect. An author might use this repetition for a particular purpose such as to reinforce an idea, add humour or to build tension in a scene.

2. As a class group, the teacher and students use this common icebreaker game: students put an adjective before their name. For example, 'I am going on a picnic and I am inviting …Dancing Dave'. This game can be played in a circle. Challenge students to add more adjectives and to remember the people before them. Ask students to justify how their ideas are examples of alliteration. Discuss how adding an adjective like 'dancing' adds humour and more detail to the text.

3. Students work in pairs to create ice-cream flavours. Students design ice-cream flavours, where each 'scoop' is an example of alliteration for example, moreish mango macadamia, choc-chip cherry chocolate. Discuss how adding adjectives helps to add detail to the ice cream flavour, as well as to show a connection between the ingredients.

Personification

1. Display this example of personification: 'The clouds marched across the sky'. Ask students what they picture in their minds when they read this. Explain that this is an example of personification. Personification is when human attributes, thoughts, feelings, physical characteristics, are given to non-human things. Personification can be found in many texts including poetry and novels.

2. The teacher asks students, why do you think an author might use personification? Discuss that personification helps a reader to form an image about what is happening and is a way of adding detail and imagery.

3. The teacher could provide three to four examples of personification and discuss them with the class.

4. Students, in pairs or small groups could find three to four of their own examples of personification and present them to the class.

5. Students complete their own example of personification for:

   a) something on their desk

   b) something they can see through the window

   c) an object in the playground.

The teacher can scaffold this by jointly constructing an example, having students suggest answers and providing examples and display on the board. The teacher could further scaffold by nominating something for each category and eliciting or suggesting traits that such objects could hold when personified.

Simile

1. Review definition of a simile as a figure of speech that compares two usually dissimilar things. The comparison includes the word 'like' or 'as'.
2. Teacher introduces what a simile is with examples and encourages student understanding by asking what students already know about this device and if they can provide examples for the discussion.
3. Teacher has simile starters displayed: as tall as a… as soft as a… as large as a… ran fast like a... Teacher reads them out, pausing at the ellipsis and prompting students to complete the simile, recording suggestions.
4. Teacher explains the Barrier game: Students sit back-to-back with an object unseen by their partner. Students give clues using senses for the student to guess the object without using any key words, for example, a tennis ball might be described as: this smells like rubber and plastic, this tastes like competition and success, this sounds like a 'thwack' as it bounces away, this looks like a golden sun in the palm of my hand and so on.
5. Teacher models how to use the simile brainstorm map. Students then work in pairs or small groups to choose an object and complete the simile brainstorm map (Appendix 4 - Simile brainstorm map), thinking of something it reminds them of, brainstorming vocabulary and composing a simile. Students can present their work to the class.
6. Students use Appendix 5 - Identifying and interpreting similes in texts, to identify examples of similes, interpret and discuss what impact these have on the text and why the author chose to use this figurative language device. Students present their ideas to the class using a graphic organiser of their choice.

    For challenge: Think-Pair-Share. Students compare, contrast and analyse how similes are used in different forms of texts, such as information and imaginative texts. Students share their ideas with the class. Teachers provide a range of texts relevant to a current unit of learning, or refer to Appendix 5 - Identifying and interpreting similes in texts.

Metaphor

1. Teacher explains that a metaphor provides information about something that is unfamiliar by comparing it to something that is familiar. For example, 'The moon was a silver coin.' This tells us that the moon was full and round. It also tells us that the moon was bright and shiny. Metaphor is different to simile because whilst a simile compares, a metaphor turns one thing completely into the other in order to compare them and share characteristics.
2. Teacher guides students to come up with and discuss other examples such as 'The library is a treasure chest.' 'My school bag is a black hole.'
3. As a class brainstorm a list of at least twenty things on the board for students to turn into metaphors for example, my mum is a, my sister is a, my bedroom is a....
4. In pairs or small groups students create at least five metaphors that they can then share with the class.

Imagery

1. Display the word 'imagery'. Discuss with students what they think it might mean. Underline the root word 'image' and reinforce that an 'image' is a picture or something you might see (or hear, smell). Explain that an image is something you might really see, like a photo, or it might be something you see or imagine in your head, for example when reading a story. Point out that imagine has the same root word of image.

2. Discuss how authors often give clues rather than tell the reader exactly what is happening; this helps build interest and keeps the reader entertained and interested, sparking their own imaginations!

3. Display a sentence (with minimal detail) to describe a location that students are familiar with, for example, "The playground's grass was green." Ask students to think about the location – what might you hear? What might you see? What might you smell? Brainstorm vocabulary to describe the playground. Have students use vocabulary to add suggestions to the sentence. Encourage them to give clues about the playground being green, but not say the word 'green'. For example, 'Strips of lime and mint grass grew wild around the sturdy legs of the equipment.'

4. Students choose an everyday location they are familiar with such as a supermarket, the playground, a local park or sporting field, or a place in the community.

5. Students work in pairs or individually to create a mind map of words and phrases that could be used to build an image of that place. This can be scaffolded by using senses as prompts such as what can you see? What can you smell? What can you hear?

6. Students create their own examples of imagery by giving clues as to where they are. Students share with the class, with the class guessing the location.

7. Explain to students that you are going to read a short extract from a novel to further explore the idea of imagery (Appendix 6 - Imagery: 'Lost in the snow'). After reading the extract with students, ask them to identify and record words or phrases that build an image in the reader's mind. Students might work in pairs and use a highlighter to identify imagery using the text extract.

8. Ask students to identify where personification has been used (the leaves, which 'whirl down to the ground and give the hens a fright'). Discuss: What effect does it have on the reader? For example, it makes the leaves and the farm come to life.

9. What if you were to remove that personification? Using the text extract, students rewrite the sentence about the leaves, but this time the leaves just fall normally, unable to make something feel afraid. How has this changed the meaning? How has this changed the effect?

10. Students select a text or their own, or use a text linked to current unit of learning and find opportunities to add more imagery.

Appendix 1

Onomatopoeia match and sort

Animal onomatopoeia. Students write in or say the matching animal.	Human onomatopoeia. Students provide an example of a situation where this could be used.	Students provide an example of a situation where this could be used.
squeak	giggle	whoosh
squawk	grunt	roar
meow	groan	zip
woof	moan	puff
moo	blurt	hiss
cluck	babble	slush
neigh	chatter	gurgle
whinny	growl	splatter
oink	murmur	crash
baa	hum	fizzle
bark	squeal	sputter
chirp	gulp	snip

Appendix 2

Examples of onomatopoeia

Text extract	Example from text extract	Why do you think the author used onomatopoeia?
"Chug, chug, chug. Puff, puff, puff. Ding-dong, ding-dong. The little train rumbled over the tracks." *"The Little Engine That Could" by Watty Piper*	*Rumbled.*	The author has used a lot of onomatopoeia to describe the train's journey and provide a sense of what journey feels like for the reader. It is a difficult journey with lots of repetition of effort, 'chug, chug, chug'. However, the little train is persistent, and it continues its journey as shown with the use of 'rumbled' which tells the reader that the train will make slow, steady and most importantly continuous effort.
"It went zip when it moved and bop when it stopped. And whirr when it stood still. I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will." *"The Marvelous Toy" by Tom Paxton*		
Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool? Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full! One for the master, one for the dame, *Nursery Rhyme*		
Water plops into pond splish-splash downhill warbling magpies in tree trilling, melodic thrill whoosh, passing breeze flags flutter and flap frog croaks, bird whistles babbling bubbles from tap "Running Water" by Lee Emmett		
Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard, He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred... "The Highwayman" by Alfred Noyes		

How is a kettle like a volcano?

How is a bath like a whirlpool?

How is a packet of skittles like a rainbow?

How is an oven like an earthquake?

Appendix 4

Simile brainstorm map

Object	**What it reminds me of**
Example: marshmallow	Example: pillow
Vocabulary	**Simile example**
Example: Fresh, pillowy, feathers, cushioned, puff, billowing, aerated	A simile compares two objects using the word 'like' or 'as'. Example: it was as soft as fresh marshmallow in its packet.

Appendix 5

Identifying and interpreting similes in texts

James and the Giant Peach, Roald Dahl (1961)

Aunt Sponge was enormously fat and very short. She had small piggy eyes, a sunken mouth and one of those white flabby faces that looked exactly as though it had been boiled. She was like a great white soggy overboiled cabbage. Aunt Spiker, on the other hand, was lean and tall and bony, and she wore steel-rimmed spectacles that fixed on to the end of her nose with a clip. She had a screeching voice and long wet narrow lips, and whenever she got angry or excited, little flecks of spit would come shooting out of her mouth as she talked. And there they sat, these two ghastly hags, sipping their drinks, and every now and again screaming at James to chop faster and faster. They also talked about themselves, each one saying how beautiful she thought she was.

If the aunt was an animal, what animal would she be? Why?

If the aunt was a piece of fruit, what would she be? Why?

If the aunt was an object, what would she be? Why?

Simile example found in text	What does it mean?	My version

Appendix 6

Imagery

Webb, H. (2006). Lost in the snow. Little tiger press group, London.

Lost in the snow

Rosebridge Farm was a beautiful place in the autumn. The leaves on the big oak tree at the corner of the farmyard had turned golden, and every so often a few of them would whirl down to the ground and give the hens a fright. The farm was a lovely old place, and the Moffat family had been dairy farmers there for over a hundred years. There were stables and a big barn, and a beautiful old farmhouse that looked cosy and inviting in the autumn sunshine.

But today no one at the farm was noticing how lovely it all was. Mr Moffat and her son Ben were in the office, looking at the accounts, and worrying.