Upper Primary

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Years 5 and 6. However, they could also be used with older students who have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

At the end of this teaching sequence, students should be able to:
- read the passages studied fluently and with a high level of inferential comprehension
- discuss the story: give opinions about the author’s language choices; identify the story’s structure, theme and ideology
- spell chosen words and understand related spelling strategies
- use the story as a model for writing.

Notes

- The following notes have been written for teachers who have attended professional development workshops in teaching Accelerated Literacy. The notes presume some understanding about how to teach the program.
- For a detailed explanation of how to implement the teaching sequence, please refer to the teachers’ handouts from the first professional development workshop. Additionally, you could refer to http://www.nalp.edu.au.
- It is also assumed that teachers have read the text on which these notes are based and have a detailed understanding of the text before beginning a teaching sequence.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring the suitability of the text on which these notes are based for their particular teaching context.

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Employment, Education and Training, and supported by Charles Darwin University.
Teaching Notes

Pannikin and Pinta
Upper Primary
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text

Pannikin and Pinta by Colin Thiele. Published in 2000 by Thomas C Lothian Pty Ltd. Page numbers provided refer to this edition.
Pannikin and Pinta
Synopsis of the story

*Pannikin and Pinta* tells the story of a family of pelicans that made their home on Lake Eyre during a time when there was water in it. After the water dried up, the pelicans were forced to leave and try to fly to the sea. Pannikin and Pinta are two members of the pelican family and the story describes their difficult and often heartbreaking journey.

**Themes**

The story conveys strong messages about conservation and the effects of careless human behaviour on nature. The negative effects of tourists on the Lake Eyre environment are made tragically clear with the death of Portly early on in the story, after he becomes entangled in a discarded fishing line. While human intervention is portrayed as a necessity for the survival of the pelicans during their journey to the ocean, the dangers of this kindly practice are also made clear.

The story also emphasises the importance of determination in achieving goals. The pelicans act on their instinct to survive. The reactions of Sam’s dad highlight what an inspiration their journey should be from a human perspective.

**Why use this story?**

The parts of the text that have been chosen for intensive study are those that use simile and metaphor to build vivid mental images of the scenery and characters. The paragraphs studied can be used to familiarise students with simile and metaphor. Features of the pelicans are given human qualities, or personified. This strategy engages readers who can then empathise with the pelicans as if they were people.

Vibrantly coloured illustrations by Peter Gouldthorpe interpret the story’s scenery, characters and events and support the text in engaging the emotions of the reader.
Structure of the text

Pannikin and Pinta is a narrative written in the third person past tense.

The tale is told in prose and although it is not separated into chapters, it can be divided into the following episodes.

Orientation

Introduction to Lake Eyre and the pelicans.

Series of complications and resolutions

- After the shrinking of the lake and the death of Portly, the journey to the coast begins.
- The pelicans are blown off-course. Pannikin and Pinta are separated from Preen and Plume during a dust storm and find themselves in Coober Pedy, where they are fed at the local pub by the chef’s daughter.
- Pannikin and Pinta pass through Kingoonya where they are fed, again at the local pub.
- Pannikin and Pinta stop at a well-stocked dam in the Gawler Ranges.

Final resolution

- Pannikin and Pinta reach the sea; however, it is too late for Pannikin.
Pannikin and Pinta

Structure of the study passage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrival of the rain</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions of:</td>
<td>One day a monsoon from the north and a cyclone from the east collided over the plains of Queensland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the clouds,</td>
<td>The clouds were darker than bruises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the rain,</td>
<td>They bulged with rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the country,</td>
<td>During the next five days they dropped billions of tonnes of water over the inland –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a vast expanse as brown as pottery and as wrinkled as old cowhide –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where everything happens hugely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and people seem smaller than flies.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect: The flood</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where the flood went and how it moved.</td>
<td>Soon the floodwater started to move southwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of the flood on the environment:</td>
<td>It was unstoppable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the land.</td>
<td>It drenched the land from horizon to horizon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creeks and rivers,</td>
<td>The creeks and rivers overflowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towns</td>
<td>until they were twenty kilometres wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All the towns were surrounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and some were drowned altogether.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and how the flood spread.</td>
<td>Near the South Australian border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the water split into a hundred different channels,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weaving and curving,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spread out on the plain like monstrous veins of brown blood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They surged into Cooper Creek and the Diamantina River and all the other watercourses,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>until they were bloated and bursting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happened to the water that started its journey in Queensland.</td>
<td>And at last, after rolling onwards for months, the flood reached the desert basin of Lake Eyre and turned it into a great inland sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That is where the story of Pannikin and Pinta begins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language features of the study passage

• This passage is an orientation which establishes a dramatic setting for the first scenes of the story. The vastness of the country and the dramatic nature of its weather provide the conditions necessary for the arrival of the pelicans. Describing a dramatic setting and then placing characters in it is a writing strategy that can be used to start a story.

• Colin Thiele builds a vivid image of the setting through the use of simile (eg like monstrous veins of brown blood) and metaphor (eg a great inland sea).

• Authors often use weather to create a mood, and here Colin Thiele establishes an air of drama, wonder and amazement at the climatic conditions. He engages the emotional response of the reader with the weather and the events taking place by using personification to describe the actions of the weather (eg they dropped billions of tonnes of water) and elements of the environment (eg The clouds were darker than bruises). The flood is portrayed not as a random event but as a series of occurrences specifically designed to transform Lake Eyre into an inland sea.

• Time phrases at the start of sentences are used to establish the sequencing of events and provide a concept of the passage of time involved (eg One day, During the next five days, Soon, And at last).
Accelerated Literacy teaching
Accelerated Literacy teaching

Teaching the sequence

The National Accelerated Literacy Program consists of a cycle of interrelated activities based on a sequence beginning with literate orientation and focused on one selected text. The text may vary from a short, illustrated story written for early childhood students to several carefully selected passages from a longer book intended for older students.

Teachers spend, on average, an hour and a half a day teaching Accelerated Literacy. The total number of weeks spent on a text across a sequence of consecutive lessons will vary according to the age of the students and the complexity of the text.

Low and high order literate orientation are carried out before reading. The other strategies use the students’ fluent reading of and common knowledge about a text as teaching resources for extending their literacy competence.

Further information on the teaching sequence can be found at http://www.nalp.edu.au.
In the classroom
In the classroom

The teaching sequence on *Pannikin and Pinta* aims to teach:

- how to read the passages studied at 90 per cent accuracy or above
- how to discuss the story, including the meaning and inferences contained in the author’s language choices
- how to spell fluently and write clearly the words taught as part of the teaching sequence
- how to write, with appropriate teacher support, a detailed description about a dramatic natural event, using time phrases to stage the sequence of events, simile and metaphor to create vivid images and personification of natural phenomena.

Literate orientation

Literate orientation is a pre-reading strategy that prepares students to read the study text fluently, accurately and independently. The teacher models a literate orientation to the text and discusses why the author made certain language choices. Literate orientation consists of two components: low order literate orientation and high order literate orientation. Both are equally important.

In low order literate orientation the teacher starts the process of ‘pointing the students’ brains’ at the text by modelling a literate interpretation of the text, including its illustrations when necessary.

In high order literate orientation the teacher shifts the students’ focus from the general considerations in the low order literate orientation to a close examination of the author’s wording in the text. The teacher systematically models how to attend closely to the language features of the text and how they construct meaning.

Low order literate orientation – Whole book

Try to read the whole book in stages, as quickly as practicable. When starting the book, give students a low order literate orientation on the whole text. You do not have to give too much detail – an overview is fine. Then provide a brief low order literate orientation to each section or episode.

Teachers should include a discussion before and after each section to ensure that students understand some of the possible inferences a literate reader might make.
Teaching focus

Orientation
- This book is about a remarkable journey these two pelicans make from Lake Eyre to the South Australian coast. [Show on a map of Australia.]
- The upper and lower borders are indications of the dry barren countryside the pelicans cross.
- Pinta, the pelican mother, is about to feed one of her offspring, Pannikin.
- Pelicans make very good parents. Pinta takes very good care of Pannikin.

Teaching focus
- The map shows the journey taken by Pannikin and Pinta. [It would be good to retrace the journey on a map of Australia to give student a better idea of the distances travelled, and also trace the path of the flood waters from Queensland to Lake Eyre.]
- Preen and Plume’s journey is not shown here, but they end up at the Coorong.

Teaching focus
- Extreme weather conditions in Queensland result in floods making their way along water courses to Lake Eyre, where they turn the usually dry lake into an inland sea.
- Before the rain the country was stark and barren, as shown in the illustration. It would take a lot of rain to make a difference.

Teaching focus
- Because of the water, plant and animal life flourishes around Lake Eyre.
- Pelicans made their way to Lake Eyre and within a year its pelican colony was the biggest in Australia. [Point to the pelicans you can just see in the background.]
- Pelicans are very good parents and look after their young with great devotion.

Teaching focus
- One particular pelican family is introduced in detail: a father, a mother and three babies. One of the babies is pictured hatching out of its egg. The other two babies haven’t yet hatched.
- Pelican babies require a lot of food each day: at least as much as their own weight.
- Tourists flocked to Lake Eyre to see the prolific wildlife but many treat the environment carelessly.
Tom Todd is a ranger sent to patrol the area. Because it is the school holidays, he brings his son, Sam, to Lake Eyre with him. Sam notices the pelican family and gives them names, all beginning with P: Portly (the father), Pinta (the mother), Preen, Plume and Pannikin (the babies).

Complication/resolution 1
- The baby pelicans are tagged for scientific research. This is an important point as the pelicans are identified later in the story by their tags.
- With no more water feeding into Lake Eyre, the lake starts to dry up and the tourists, as well as the Todds, leave.
- As they leave, Tom explains to his son that the pelicans are in danger as food is running out and the journey to the coast could be too far and too difficult for the pelicans to travel.

Teaching focus
- The fish, the pelicans’ food supply, die out as the water recedes and becomes salty.
- Tragedy strikes when Portly becomes entangled in a fishing line carelessly discarded by tourists and, unable to free himself, dies.
- The illustration’s dark colouring emphasises the sadness of Portly’s death. His family looks on unable to help, and this adds pathos.

Teaching focus
- The pelican colony is forced to leave Lake Eyre. Most of them attempt the long and dangerous journey to the coast.
- Hundreds start the journey each day but few arrive safely because there is desert between Lake Eyre and the coast, with nowhere to stop for food.

Teaching focus
- Very few pelicans make it to the coast and the few that do are so exhausted that they are unable to catch food and rely on people to feed them until they can rebuild their strength.
- So that her offspring can build up their strength, Pinta waits as long as she dares before starting the journey to the coast.
Teaching focus

Complication/resolution 2

- Strong winds blow the pelican family off course and into a dust storm, where Preen and Plume are separated from the other two.
- Too exhausted to go on, Pannikin and Pinta land by chance in the backyard of a pub in Coober Pedy.

Teaching focus

- Pannikin and Pinta rest, too exhausted to move.
- Luckily, fish delivered to the pub that day is off and the manager instructs the chef to throw it out to the cat.

Teaching focus

- The chef’s daughter, Sophie, discovers the exhausted pelicans and feeds the fish to them.
- Sophie continues to feed the pelicans. People come to see them, as it is so rare to see pelicans in that area.
- The pelicans become used to people and lose their fear of them.

Teaching focus

Complication/resolution 3

- The novelty of the pelicans wears off. To Sophie’s dismay, the pub manager will no longer let Sophie feed them.
- With no more food available, the pelicans leave Coober Pedy and continue their journey.

Teaching focus

- Pinta watches Pannikin closely as a wind blows from behind, helping them on their journey.
- The pelicans are exhausted and unable to continue when signs of humans lure them to land at a tiny town called Kingoonya, where a kindly tourist pays the local publican for a meagre meal fed to the pelicans from a bucket.
- Pinta makes sure Pannikin has enough to eat before she eats any herself.

Teaching focus

Complication/resolution 4

- The pelicans continue their journey but it is a huge struggle for Pannikin, who has become very weak.
- Luck is with them as a series of strong thermal winds carries them to a station dam, which is stocked with fish.
Teaching focus

- The station owner isn't happy about the pelicans resting in his dam and helping themselves to his fish. When they don't leave, he fires his shotgun into the air to scare them away.
- By now, the pelicans are very trusting of humans and don't fly away until the station owner fires into the water near the pelicans.

Teaching focus

**Final resolution**

- The pelicans are on the last leg of their journey and Pinta instinctively takes the shortest route to the coast and to Streaky Bay, where Tom and Sam Todd live.
- We learn of Pinta's final act of love for Pannikin from a farmer who stops at a local store to tell an incredible tale of seeing a pelican (Pinta) piggy-backing another pelican (Pannikin). Pinta has carried the exhausted Pannikin on her back over the final few kilometres to the coast.

Teaching focus

- Later that day Sam Todd and his friend are on their way home from fishing when they notice Pinta on the beach and then see Pannikin lying at her feet.
- Guessing that Pannikin is starving, they try to feed him. He is too weak to eat, so they give the fish to Pinta instead.
- Sam notices the tag on Pannikin’s leg and realises that he is one of the pelicans he had named and helped to tag at Lake Eyre.

Teaching focus

- Sam and his friend run home to get help for Pannikin from Mr Todd but, by the time they return, Pannikin has died.
- Mr Todd comforts Sam by pointing out what an inspiration it was that Pannikin had travelled so far, even though he was exhausted and starving. He had not given up.

Teaching focus

- Sam and his friend bury Pannikin on the headland within sight of the sea, which he had died trying to reach.
- The colours in the illustration emphasise the emotion felt by Sam.
Teaching focus

- Pinta watches the boys and follows them home, probably hoping for more food, but she has already eaten all the fish they had caught.
- Pinta is still there the next day, and Sam persuades his father to let him feed her just for a week, until she is strong enough to catch her own food.
- A few days later Mr Todd shows Sam a fax he’d received.

Teaching focus

- The fax was from a ranger in the Coorong, telling Mr Todd that Preen and another pelican, probably Plume, had been sighted there. He had been able to identify Preen by his tag.
- Pinta becomes stronger and begins to catch her own food again. Sam sees less of her.
- Eventually, Pinta accepts one final fish from Sam before taking off for the last time.

Teaching focus

- As Sam watches and appreciates Pinta’s grace and beauty, he expresses his hopes that she will be reunited with Preen and Plume.

Teaching focus

- Sam watches as Pinta becomes a tiny speck in the distance and finally disappears.

Read the story aloud

Having read the whole book, sections at a time, you may choose to read the whole book or parts of it again, particularly the sections that include the study passages. This rereading will help keep the study passages in context.

Refine the focus to the study passage

Once you have started reading the book and have read at least to the end of the orientation, return to the beginning of the study passage one (the orientation) to start looking at the author’s language choices in closer detail. You can then spend part of each lesson reading the book to students, and another part working on the study passage.
Low order literate orientation – Study passage

Teaching focus

• The study passage is part of the orientation. It doesn’t introduce any characters, but instead describes the setting of the first part of the story.
• The story starts in Queensland where torrential rains create a huge flood. The floodwaters make their way along waterways such as Cooper Creek and the Diamantina River to Lake Eyre in South Australia. It would have taken thousands of years of repeated floods for these watercourses to form. Locate the plains of Queensland, Cooper Creek, the Diamantina River and Lake Eyre on a map of Australia. Also point out the towns along the path of the floodwaters.
• The illustration graphically depicts the dramatic nature of the storm and the contrast between the dry inland and flooding rains. The abandoned car reminds us that life is tough in this area.
• It is important that the reader appreciates the immensity of the flood, and so Colin Thiele spends some time describing it in a vivid and dramatic way. The inland, the rain, the flood, the distances and the time are all portrayed as being huge.
• Lake Eyre is usually a dry salt pan where only the hardiest plant and animal life can survive. Once every ten years or so extreme weather conditions and the resultant floods described in *Pannikin and Pinta* cause Lake Eyre to become a true lake containing water and able to sustain an abundance of life.

High order literate orientation – Study passage

The study passage describes the origins of Lake Eyre. It creates a dramatic mood on a grand scale with the description of the enormity of the event that created the inland sea.
## Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arrival of the rain</strong></td>
<td>The author uses time to stage the text here. It starts <em>One day</em>, an indefinite time initially. Then we find that this one day was during the wet season, the time for monsoons. Monsoons and cyclones are huge rain-bearing winds. By using the word <em>collide</em> to describe the meeting of the two weather patterns, the author suggests a violent impact between them. He uses this description to affect the emotions of the readers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One day a monsoon from the north and a cyclone from the east collided over the plains of Queensland.</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Descriptions of clouds, rain and country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The clouds were darker than bruises.</em></td>
<td>The author adds to the metaphor of a collision by describing the clouds as being <em>darker than bruises</em>. The word <em>bulged</em> is also a powerful choice, creating an expectation that the clouds are about to violently burst, resulting in a great deal of rain. This is not a scientific description. Instead it gives the impression that the weather was choosing to act violently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>They bulged with rain.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>During the next five days they dropped billions of tonnes of water</em></td>
<td>The next sentence continues to stage the story in time. The fact that the clouds dropped <em>billions of tonnes of water</em> adds to the feeling that the clouds were acting purposefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>over the inland – a vast expanse as brown as pottery and as wrinkled as old cowhide – where everything happens hugely and people seem smaller than flies.</em></td>
<td>The author now describes where the rain has fallen. He uses simile to describe the country in more detail. The description <em>as brown as pottery</em> conveys its colour, <em>as wrinkled as cowhide</em> its texture. It is so vast that its inhabitants seem insignificant and events are huge. This description is of the inland plains of Queensland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## The flood: Where and how it moved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The flood: Where and how it moved</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Soon the floodwater started to move southwards.</em></td>
<td>The word <em>Soon</em> continues to place the sequence of events in a timeframe. What has started as <em>rain</em> becomes <em>water</em> and then <em>floodwater</em>. It has now <em>started to move</em>. This gives the impression that the water chose this action. However, it is a natural event – the natural flow of water through the Australian river systems is to move south.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was unstoppable. The word *unstoppable* has emotional undertones. It gives the floodwaters power. The people who earlier were *smaller than flies* are powerless against it.

### Effect of the flood on land, creeks, rivers and towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It drenched the land from horizon to horizon.</td>
<td>The author then describes the effect the floodwaters had on the environment – a drenching on an immense scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The creeks and rivers overflowed until they were twenty kilometres wide.</td>
<td>This description emphasises the breadth of the flood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the towns were surrounded and some were drowned altogether.</td>
<td>The impact of the flood started with the whole land, then focused in on the rivers and creeks and now narrows further to the towns. We can now imagine the effect of the flood on the people. We can imagine the people fighting the flood with sandbags, drying out their houses and crying at the sight of their ruined furniture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Where and how the flood spread

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near the South Australian border the water split into a hundred different channels, weaving and curving, spread out on the plain like monstrous veins of brown blood.</td>
<td>The water started its journey in Queensland and the author is now bringing it to the location of the lake that is the setting for the beginning of the story. Here the water <em>split into a hundred different channels</em>. This is water on a large scale again and, to intensify the image, the author describes the movement of the water as <em>weaving and curving</em>. These hundreds of <em>weaving, curving</em> channels then spread out on the plain <em>like monstrous veins of brown blood</em>. This simile continues to compare the behaviour of the rain, the water and the floodwater with human characteristics as started in the first paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They surged on into Cooper Creek and the Diamantina River and all the other watercourses, until they were bloated and bursting.</td>
<td>Then, having spread out across the plains, the floodwater now <em>surged on into Cooper Creek and the Diamantina River and all the other watercourses</em>. These watercourses were filled with floodwaters until they were <em>bloated and bursting</em>. Throughout this passage the author has maintained cohesion in the metaphors used. The clouds that <em>bulged with rain</em> and flooded the plains, filled the rivers until they were <em>bloated and bursting</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And at last, after rolling onwards for months, the flood reached the desert basin of Lake Eyre and turned it into a great inland sea.

This paragraph concludes the description of the setting for the story. It tells readers what happened to the water that started its journey in Queensland. This paragraph also continues to stage the story in time before we reach this point. The words, at last, tell us it seemed a long time. The words, after rolling onwards for months, tells us that the rain that took five days to fall took months more to complete its journey. The water’s destination was the desert basin of Lake Eyre, where it became a great inland sea. It is clear at this stage why the author built up so carefully to this point. Later in the story Lake Eyre dries up, as it does periodically. However, it is a vast lake and an enormous amount of water is needed to fill it. The author emphasises the enormity and power of nature.

That is where the story of Pannikin and Pinta begins.

Finally, as the author concludes the description of the setting for the story, he foreshadows the introduction of the central characters – Pannikin and Pinta.

**Transformations**

Transformations is an activity designed to change students’ orientation to the text under consideration from that of a reader looking for meaning to that of a writer learning how the author used various literary techniques to achieve a particular effect or purpose.

In addition, transformations provides a key opportunity for ‘handover’ of understanding about the language choices in the text. The questioning techniques in this part of the teaching sequence reflect the growing common knowledge shared between class members, and between class members and the teacher. A successful handover might mean, for example, that there is less need for preformulation.

**Goals of the transformations**

**Comprehension**

Transformations on this text will help the students to understand how the author builds an image of the immensity of the inland and of the rains, the resultant floodwater and the path taken to reach Lake Eyre.
Word recognition leading to spelling
Students’ word recognition can be developed through cloze-type activities and games using words taken from the transformations board.

Writing
Particular literate features, eg the structure of the text studied, use of simile, metaphor and personification, can be studied in detail to assist students with their own writing.

Teaching focus

**Arrival of the rain**
The author opens the tale of Pannikin and Pinta with a detailed description of the weather conditions that lead to Lake Eyre being filled with water. Monsoons and cyclones are each impressive on their own, but combined they are formidable. While rare, collisions do happen, and with amazing results. On this occasion, it just happened *one day*. The use of *collided* adds drama to the event.

**Description of clouds, rain and the country**
The collision theme is continued. A collision often results in injuries of some kind and here *bruises* are the implied result. We are familiar with the colour of bruises and so we are left in no doubt as to the colour of the clouds.

The description of the clouds is expanded. They were so heavy with rain that they *bulged*, ready to burst and dump all the rain on the land below.

There was a huge amount of rain, *billions of tonnes*. Even without an understanding of *tonnes*, the word *billions* is enough to convey the idea of a huge amount of rain. The author implies that it was a deliberate act on the part of the clouds, as *they dropped* the rain.

The author describes the size, colour and texture of the country where the rain was dropped. It was a *vast expanse*, uninterrupted by any significant landforms. The author uses simile to create a clear image of the colour and texture of the inland, comparing the colour to *pottery* and the texture to *old cowhide*. The author emphasises the size by pointing out that events in the inland are always huge. He implies that nature rules and that people are insignificant, even helpless, when faced by the forces of nature.
The flood: where and how it moved
The author uses the word *Soon* to let us know that it didn’t take long for the rain to become floodwater and start to move towards the south. He implies that it moved with a deliberate intent.

The floodwater could not be stopped. Again, intent is implied. It was determined to continue its journey.

The effect of the flood on land, creeks, rivers and towns
The land was drenched for as far as the eye could see. Again, the enormity is emphasised. The creeks and rivers could not contain the floodwaters. They overflowed and spread across the land, making each or the rivers and creeks twenty kilometres wide.

All the towns were surrounded by the floodwaters. Some must have been on low ground to have been drowned altogether. The author personifies these towns in suggesting that they were *drowned*.

Where and how the flood spread
The author now returns to the path taken by the water. The water *split* and spread out to cover even wider expanses of land. Size is again emphasised through the words *hundred* and *monstrous*. The author suggests that the water has become a source of energy and life, using a simile suggesting the channels containing the water were *like monstrous veins of blood*. This is a subtle foreshadowing of the life the water was to bring to Lake Eyre. Once there it transformed Lake Eyre. It *turned it into a great inland sea*. Again the author’s choice of words suggests that the flood acted deliberately.

The momentum of the water is not diminished by the distance it has travelled – it *surged on* and entered the Cooper Creek and Diamantina River. There was so much water it filled all the watercourses. The author again uses personification suggesting that the watercourses were uncomfortably bloated by the water until they were ready to burst.

Conclusion
This dramatic journey has taken months. The author makes sure we realise that this is a long time by starting his conclusion with the words, *And at last*. Although the journey has been long, the words *after rolling onwards* suggest that it has not been a difficult one for the flood. The flood was in no hurry and finally it reached its destination, Lake Eyre. Once there it transformed Lake Eyre. *It turned it into a great inland sea*. Again the author’s choice of words suggests that the flood acted deliberately.

Finally the story of Pannikin and Pinta can begin. All that has gone before has set up the right conditions for the pelicans and their story.
Spelling

The spelling segment of the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence follows transformations once the teacher is reasonably sure that students are able to recognise many of the words from the text out of context. Teachers are then able to use the students’ ability to hold a stable image of a word in their memory to show how that word can be broken into letter pattern chunks. Spelling activities include joint reconstructed writing.

How to choose spelling words

Keep the following points in mind when choosing words to work on in spelling:

- Are there any words that have patterns (or letters) that students have worked on before?
- Are there any new patterns that occur more than once or are commonly occurring?
- Are there any words that have interesting origins or roots that will help students develop an understanding of English?
- Which words will help students with joint reconstructed writing?
- Which words that students have already been taught need revision?
- Consider students’ age and stage of spelling development.

Suggestions for spelling

This text has been benchmarked at upper primary or early secondary level, so it would be reasonable to assume that many students studying this text would be negotiating the transitional stage of spelling while others will have developed beyond this to be quite capable independent spellers. Work on words that help students use visual strategies to notice larger chunks of letters that go together to make orthographic patterns, and explore words with interesting origins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-ou-</th>
<th>-ur-</th>
<th>compound words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cl/ouds</td>
<td>s/urge/d</td>
<td>Queens/land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sur/ound/ed</td>
<td>c/urv/ing</td>
<td>in/land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/outh</td>
<td>t/urv/ed</td>
<td>cow/hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b/urst/ing</td>
<td>every/thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>flood/water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**double final consonant to add suffix**

- dr/opp/ed
- un/stopp/able

**drop –e to add –ing**

- w/eav/ing
- c/urv/ing

-ou–

-ur–

compound words

- south/wards
- over/flowed
- water/courses
- on/wards
Etymology

Etymological information on selected words is always interesting for students. Many websites, as well as dictionaries and other books, provide etymological information. Two informative websites are http://www.etymonline.com and http://www.thefreedictionary.com

Examples

monsoon: ‘trade wind of the Indian Ocean’, 1584, from Du. monssoen, from Port. monçao, from Ar. mawsim ‘appropriate season’ (for a voyage, pilgrimage, etc.), from Wasama ‘he marked’. When it blows from the southwest (April through October) it brings heavy rain, hence ‘the rainy season’ (1747).

cyclone: 1848, coined by British East India Company Official, Henry Piddington, to describe the devastating storm of December 1789 in Coringa, India. From Gk. kyklon ‘moving in a circle, whirling around’, pp. of kykloun ‘move in a circle, whirl,’ from kyklos ‘circle’ (see cycle). Applied to tornadoes from 1856.

Joint reconstructed writing

Joint reconstructed writing provides a transition from spelling activities to writing activities and works best when taken from transformations. Joint reconstructed writing involves the teacher and students working together to reconstruct the text using the same words as the author. It successfully reduces the stress associated with working out what to write about, what to write and how to write it. Stress associated with spelling is greatly reduced, giving students the mental space to think about subject matter and language choices.

The teacher ‘thinks aloud’ to reconstruct a passage with the students, using the writer’s language choices. This is a culmination of all the shared knowledge built up so far about language choices used in the construction and positioning of particular phrases and includes the dimensions of letter formation, the role of initial consonants and blends, and visual patterns.

Joint reconstruction of this section and others will greatly assist with the discussions about the writing and the writing workshops. There is no need to reconstruct the whole passage. The students’ responses during joint reconstructed writing will give the teacher an indication of how much of the literate discourse students can control.

Reconstruct sentences, paragraphs and sections of text as appropriate. For example, reconstruct the first four sentences in paragraph one where the author tells us where the rain came from and uses simile to describe the clouds and the inland.
What you could say

I wonder if anyone can remember how Colin Thiele started his story. He tells us when the monsoon and cyclone occurred. It wasn’t any particular time. It was just *One day*. Can you write *One day*? Remember to start with a capital. At this stage, the author doesn’t tell us exactly when it happened but, because he goes on to tell us about the monsoon and the cyclone, we know it must have been some time during the wet season.

Remember that the author tells us about the two weather conditions that caused all the rain. What was the first weather condition? It was a monsoon. We’ve all practised spelling *monsoon*, so let’s all have a go at it now. Remember the chunks, *mon* and *soon*. It’s a monsoon that usually comes from the north and causes the rain we get in the wet season, so it’s nothing unusual really.

Where did the monsoon come from? It was *from the north*. Have a go at writing, *from the north*. If you’re not sure of some of the words, wait for me to write them. Colin Thiele tells us all about the directions in this orientation to his story because it’s important to help us understand where the rain started and where the rainwater eventually ends up, so far away in Lake Eyre.

[Continue the conversation about the words the author chose and what they mean alongside the conversation about spelling patterns. The students write in their books. The teacher writes on the board. Students can choose to use what they know, or wait for the teacher, who should ensure that the students form the words in their chunks.]

**Writing**

Writing activities should not be based only on patterning, but also on a principled understanding of why writers use specific techniques. For example, it is not much use substituting words to write a ‘new’ sentence or paragraph if students do not know what the skill they are learning is about or when to use it.

Writing goals consist of goals for the whole teaching sequence (overall goals), as well as goals for individual lessons (short-term goals).

Goals for *Pannikin and Pinta* would include:

- overall goals, such as writing a detailed description about a dramatic natural event, using time phrases to stage the sequence of events and personification of the forces of nature, simile and metaphor to create vivid images
- short-term goals, such as writing about a topic with expansion to give details, using simile and metaphor to create vivid images and using personification to write about features of nature such as waves, rain, thunder clouds, strong winds and hot winds.
Workshop

Introduce a dramatic natural event then use expansion, simile and metaphor to describe the conditions that existed before and during the event.

Use the following structure from the transformations as a model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description 1</th>
<th>Description 2</th>
<th>Description 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arrival of rain</strong></td>
<td><strong>The clouds</strong> The clouds were darker than bruises. They bulged with rain.</td>
<td><strong>The rain</strong> During the next five days they dropped billions of tonnes of water over the inland</td>
<td><strong>The land</strong> – a vast expanse as brown as pottery and as wrinkled as old cowhide – where everything happens hugely and people seem smaller than flies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description 1</th>
<th>Description 2</th>
<th>Description 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lightning strike</strong></td>
<td><strong>The lightning</strong> It split the dark sky in half as it speared to earth and struck.</td>
<td><strong>The tree</strong> The stately old gum had stood there for more than two hundred years but it took only seconds to become a ball of fire shooting sparks into the surrounding forest.</td>
<td><strong>The fire</strong> The sparks took hold of the drying ferns and grew into flames that danced and leaped through the undergrowth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description 1</th>
<th>Description 2</th>
<th>Description 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat wave</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clear skies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sun and heat</strong></td>
<td><strong>The heat wave</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arrival of a hail storm</strong></td>
<td><strong>The clouds</strong></td>
<td><strong>The hail</strong></td>
<td><strong>Where the hail fell</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample weekly plan

The following weekly plan is included as a guide only to the way teachers could move through the teaching sequence over a period of time. The plan’s content has been condensed. In reality, working through this text will take some weeks, and the following one-week plan could actually take two or even three weeks to complete. Parts of a session that are not finished in one lesson can be picked up in the next. Teachers will need to introduce the subsequent lesson/s carefully so students know what to expect, what the purpose of the lesson is, and where they are in the teaching sequence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low order literate orientation</strong></td>
<td>Examine map and read the first page, focusing on location and time.</td>
<td>Read the rest of the orientation, focusing on the description of the pelicans and the devotion of the parents to their offspring.</td>
<td>Read Complication/resolution 1, focusing on the tragedy of Portly’s death and the danger for the remaining pelicans.</td>
<td>Read Complication/resolution 2, focusing on Pinta’s choice to stay close to Pannikin, and the sequence of events during the stop over in Coober Pedy.</td>
<td>Read Complication/resolution 3, focusing on the pelicans’ growing trust of and reliance on humans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read story with the class. Students join in when they can.**

| High order literate orientation | Passage One, One day… smaller than flies. | Soon the floodwater…drowned altogether. | Near the South Australian border…bloat and bursting. | And at last … Pannikin and Pinta begins. | Review with focus on time phrases and structure. |

| Transformations | Sentence one, the arrival of the rain | Description of the clouds (metaphor) Description of the rain | Description of the inland (simile) | Description of the inland (simile) | Review |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>monsoon</th>
<th>cyклон</th>
<th>collide/d</th>
<th>plain/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c/oud/s</td>
<td>dark/er</td>
<td>br/ush/s</td>
<td>bulge/d</td>
<td>dr/app/ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in/land</td>
<td>Jointly reconstruct One day… They bulged with rain.</td>
<td>v/ast</td>
<td>expanse</td>
<td>pat/tery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrinkle/d</td>
<td>hide</td>
<td>every/thing</td>
<td>huge/ly</td>
<td>potty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small/er</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Jointly reconstruct During the next five days … smaller than flies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Study passage two

### Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement</strong></td>
<td>The father was a fat bird with a paunch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expansion</strong></td>
<td>He often sat silently, like a wise thinker.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statements</strong></td>
<td>The mother was gracious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expansions</strong></td>
<td>Everything about her was beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Her bill shone like pink pearlshell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>and the feathers on the long curve of her neck were as white and smooth as alabaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>When she stood up she looked like the queen of the pelicans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Several black feathers grew up from the edges of her wings like arrows pointing across her back. They made her different from all the others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character 3–5</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement</strong></td>
<td>The babies were wonderfully ugly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expansions</strong></td>
<td>They were pink and featherless,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>awkward and ungainly. They flopped about when they tried to walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Most of the time they crouched with their beaks open, waiting to be fed, because every day they needed to eat enough food to equal their own weight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters 1 and 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement</strong></td>
<td>Their parents worked ceaselessly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expansion</strong></td>
<td>bringing back fish and shrimps and small titbits so that the babies could feed from their creels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters 3–5</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement</strong></td>
<td>The three of them grew quickly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why use this passage

Passage two introduces the pelican family to which Pannikin and Pinta belong. The father, mother and babies are each introduced with a statement about their most obvious features. Each character is the subject in the descriptive statement, giving them due importance and emphasis.

Colin Thiele then expands on each statement to develop an image and appreciation of the characters. Positive language choices help to endear each of the pelicans to the reader. Features of each bird are detailed, using rich descriptive language; for example, gracious, pink pearlshell, long curve of her neck, wonderfully ugly.

The author uses pairs of adjectives that serve to emphasise details and to intensify the images being created; for example, white and smooth, pink and featherless, awkward and ungainly.

As in passage one, simile is used to create vivid images: this time of the pelicans; for example, like a wise thinker, like pink pearlshell, as white as alabaster, like the queen of the pelicans, like arrows pointing across her back.
Photocopiable masters
One day a monsoon from the north and a cyclone from the east collided over the plains of Queensland.

The clouds were darker than bruises.

They bulged with rain.

During the next five days they dropped billions of tonnes of water over the inland – a vast expanse as brown as pottery and as wrinkled as old cowhide where everything happens hugely and people seem smaller than flies.

Soon the floodwater started to move southwards.

It was unstoppable.

It drenched the land from horizon to horizon.

The creeks and rivers overflowed until they were twenty kilometres wide.

All the towns were surrounded and some were drowned altogether.

Extracts from *Pannikin and Pinta* are reproduced by permission of the publisher, Thomas C Lothian Pty Ltd. Text copyright © Colin Thiele, 2000
Near the South Australian border the water split into a hundred different channels,

weaving and curving,

spread out on the plain like monstrous veins of brown blood.

They surged on into Cooper Creek and the Diamantina River and all the other watercourses,

until they were bloated and bursting.

And at last, after rolling onwards for months, the flood reached the desert basin of Lake Eyre

and turned it into a great inland sea.

That is where the story of Pannikin and Pinta begins.
The father was a fat bird with a paunch.
He often sat silently, like a wise thinker.

The mother was gracious.
Everything about her was beautiful.
Her bill shone like pink pearlshell
and the feathers on the long curve of her neck were as white and smooth as alabaster.
When she stood up she looked like the queen of the pelicans.
Several black feathers grew up from the edges of her wings
like arrows pointing across her back.
They made her different from all the others.
The babies were wonderfully ugly.

They were pink and featherless, awkward and ungainly.

They flopped about when they tried to walk.

Most of the time they crouched with their beaks open,

waiting to be fed,

because every day they needed to eat enough food to equal their own weight.

Their parents worked ceaselessly,

bringing back fish and shrimps and small titbits

so that the babies could feed from their creels.

The three of them grew quickly.
Upper Primary

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Years 5 and 6. However, they could also be used with older students who have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

At the end of this teaching sequence, students should be able to:

- read the passages studied fluently and with a high level of inferential comprehension
- discuss the story: give opinions about the author’s language choices; identify the story’s structure, theme and ideology
- spell chosen words and understand related spelling strategies
- use the story as a model for writing.

Notes

- The following notes have been written for teachers who have attended professional development workshops in teaching Accelerated Literacy. The notes presume some understanding about how to teach the program.
- For a detailed explanation of how to implement the teaching sequence, please refer to the teachers’ handouts from the first professional development workshop. Additionally, you could refer to http://www.nalp.edu.au.
- It is also assumed that teachers have read the text on which these notes are based and have a detailed understanding of the text before beginning a teaching sequence.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring the suitability of the text on which these notes are based for their particular teaching context.