Early Childhood

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 1. However, they could also be used in the second half of kindergarten (first year of school) and in Year 2 where students have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

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

- read the story studied fluently and interpret the illustrations at a high level
- 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.

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Teaching Notes

The Wishing Well

Early Childhood
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text

There are different versions of *Mouse Tales* on the market. These notes are based on the American English edition (HarperCollins, 1972). If you have the British English version, you will find some minor variations from the text described here. For example, at the start of ‘The Wishing Well’ the American version reads *Now all of my wishes can come true!* rather than *Now all my wishes can come true!* It is a simple matter to adjust your discussion of the text to take account of these small differences.

The transcript

‘In the classroom’ includes sections of a transcript of a videoed lesson. These demonstrate authentic examples of the negotiation roles taken by one teacher and a class and are not all that could be said. The transcript segments are presented as dialogue in the following format:

**T:** Question or comment by the teacher  
**S:** Response from the students
The Wishing Well
Synopsis of the story

‘The Wishing Well’ is the first of seven very short stories in the book *Mouse Tales*. It is about a young mouse who discovers a wishing well. If all her wishes come true, she will no longer have to live a life of poverty. Unfortunately, however, the well refuses to grant even one of her wishes. The story tells how the smart young mouse uncovers the problem and resolves it, so that she can finally enjoy the benefits of finding her very own wishing well.

Themes

‘The Wishing Well’ has many of the features of a folk tale, including a magical element. Here a wishing well makes it possible for the mouse to change her circumstances. When the well does not initially fulfil its function, the mouse has to use all her ingenuity and persistence to resolve the situation.

Why use this story?

‘The Wishing Well’ is a simple text for early readers, but it is its simplicity that allows teachers to concentrate on a few literate language features that are used well by the author. For example:

- It can be used to show students the stages of a narrative.
- It can be used to show students how authors use reactions in writing.
- It can be used to show students how to use time phrases to stage their writing.
- Simple word choices and short sentences reduce overload for early readers.
- Illustrations provide additional information that is not included in the wording.

Structure of the text

‘The Wishing Well’ is a narrative with easily identified orientation, complication and resolution staging. For example:

**Orientation:** A mouse once found a wishing well ... and made a wish.

**Complication:** “OUCH!” said the wishing well ... never ever come true this way!”

**Resolution:** The mouse ran home ... every one of them came true.
Language features of the text

Reactions are used to convey emotion

The characters in ‘The Wishing Well’ often react to events by saying something. For example:

Event: A mouse once found a wishing well.
Reaction: “Now all of my wishes can come true!” she cried.
Events: She threw a penny into the well and made a wish.
Reaction: “OUCH!” said the wishing well.
Events: The mouse ran home. She took the pillow from her bed.
Reaction: “This may help,” said the mouse …

These reactions provide the means for readers to identify with the character. Early readers need the function of these language choices pointed out to them, as this event–reaction pattern occurs in much of their reading.

Time is used to stage the story

Time phrases used as sentence themes signal the staging of the text and the event sequence (eg The next day, After that day). Conjunctions also serve this purpose (eg and, then).

Other language features

- The author uses short sentences of one or two simple events so that the event sequence is easy to follow (eg Then she threw a penny into the well and made a wish).
- The author uses words that tell when (eg once, The next day) and where (eg into the well, from her bed). Showing students how authors use these language choices helps them use similar choices in their own writing.
- The author uses a relatively small range of words. Readers therefore don’t have to cope with a lot of new words and are able to focus on other features of the story. Nevertheless, some word choices, such as the use of cried rather than ‘said’ to indicate the mouse’s excitement, are worth commenting on.
- The illustrations add information that is not contained in the written text to compensate for the story’s fairly simple language. For example, the mouse’s ragged clothes at the beginning of the story contrast with the queenly clothes she wishes for at the end. Children, particularly those with little experience of literature, may need to have such information pointed out to them.
Books with similar themes


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
The teaching sequence on ‘The Wishing Well’ aims to teach:

- how to read the story 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 use the passage studied as a model for writing simple narratives using an orientation, complication, resolution structure
- how to write, with appropriate teacher support, a short narrative about a magic object that helps a character achieve a long-held desire.

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 general considerations 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

Teaching focus

- Introduce the author and the type of stories he wrote (animals that behave like people)
- Purpose of lesson: to become experts on the work of this author
- Explanation of activity (to look at the pictures)
What you could say

**Introduce the author and the type of stories he wrote**

Now the author of this book or this particular story, 'The Wishing Well', is Arnold Lobel and Arnold Lobel is a famous author who is dead now but when he was alive he wrote many, many stories about animals, especially mice because they were his favourite thing. But in the stories his animals behaved more like people than real animals.

**Purpose of lesson**

Now we are going to find out everything we can about how Arnold Lobel wrote his stories, and by the time we have finished you are going to be experts on Arnold Lobel. Anybody will be able to come in and say now what sort of things does Arnold Lobel write about and you will be able to tell them all about 'The Wishing Well' and the way the author wrote it.

OK, so today is the first day in you becoming expert readers and talkers about this book.

**Explanation of activity**

So, first of all, the first thing we do is look at the pictures in the book and see how they can help us with the words, because in this sort of book it’s very interesting to know that you find out more about the mouse herself from the pictures than you do from the words. Mostly you find out about what the mouse did and said in the words, but we can learn a lot about the mouse from looking at the pictures.

OK, so that’s the first thing we are going to do.

**The orientation**

**Teaching focus**

The overall message to impart in this discussion is that the mouse has found a magic object (a wishing well), and that this discovery has extra meaning for her because she is probably quite poor. She seems to have an understanding of how to use a wishing well and she has a penny ready, but the students may need to have these objects described.

- Explanation of the purpose of a wishing well
- What it means to ‘make a wish’
- Significance of the clothing worn by the mouse (her ragged clothes probably mean she is poor)
- What the mouse is doing on the day she discovers the wishing well
- How to use a wishing well: it requires money, in this case, 'pennies'
- Predictions about the wishes the mouse will make
What you could say

**Explanation of the purpose of a wishing well**
Now, like I told you before, this story is called ‘The Wishing Well’ and here is the wishing well here. Now a wishing well is a very, very special thing. It would be a wonderful thing if we could find one for ourselves.

S: I’ve seen one.
T: Have you? Where have you seen one?
S: When we were driving and we saw one with rubbish in it.
T: Well, weren’t they silly to throw rubbish in the wishing well?

**What it means to ‘make a wish’**
They can’t have known what to do because if you find a wishing well, a real working wishing well, not just a pretend one, if you find a real one, see that little handle, on ordinary wells there’s often a bucket on the end of that rope and they lower the bucket down and bring it up and there’s water in it. But this particular well wasn’t a water well, it was a wishing well. You had to throw money into it, not very much, it could just be a little bit of money and if you said you wanted something, you really, really wanted something like ‘I wish for a new bike,’ just before your eyes there would be a new bike. Or if you wanted a new dress you could say ‘I wish for a new dress with special braid on it,’ and just like that you would be in a new dress. So you could have anything you want if you found one of these wishing wells.

**Significance of the clothing worn by the mouse (her ragged clothes probably mean she is poor)**
Now, you have a look at this mouse. You have a very, very careful look at what she is wearing. Can you see that she has got a little dress on, hasn’t she?

S: She’s wearing rags.
T: Oh! Can you see that from there? You are so clever. That’s right.

She is wearing rags because she doesn’t have any money to buy some new clothes, so she puts these raggy clothes on every day, I suppose she washes them and she mends them because it has got a little patch on it, but that is all she has got to wear and she only lives in a very poor, poor little house that we will see a little bit later when we go through the pictures. So she doesn’t have a nice big house or any clothes or anything.

**What the mouse is doing on the day she discovers the wishing well**
On this particular day this little mouse was going for a walk. I don’t think she had anything better to do, she didn’t have a TV or anything, so she just was walking through the bush around her place I suppose, and she mustn’t have walked this way before. She must have been looking for a new way because she was just going walk, walk, walk, when all of a sudden before her very eyes there was a wishing well. Now she was so excited. She was going ‘Wow! A wishing well. This is going to be fantastic! Now I can have everything I have ever wanted’
because wishing wells just keep giving you things as long as you have money to put in them.

S: (inaudible)
T: Exactly.
S: But she could wish for money, more money so she could get more things.
T: Absolutely correct. Fantastic, that’s exactly right.

**How to use a wishing well: it requires money, in this case, ‘pennies’**

So all the money she had in actual fact was some pennies. Now, I don’t have my pennies here with me today, but a penny is about the size of a 20 cent piece, so it’s quite heavy. You can’t buy anything with pennies these days, and that’s the only sort of money that she had was a few pennies that she had lying around. That was all the money she had to start with, and you can see here that when she found it the first thing she did was take out her penny and she threw it in the well and she made a wish.

**Predictions about the wishes the mouse will make**

We don’t know what she wished for first but I would think, if it was me, the first thing I would wish for would be a new dress. And I might wish for a really special dress and for beautiful jewellery and …

S: Some more money.
T: That’s right, you would have to wish for a bit more money wouldn’t you, so you could keep on wishing? Exactly, you are very clever children.

And then I might then wish for my favourite thing to eat, which is ice-cream I’m afraid to say. So that would be the sort of thing I would wish for, but we don’t know yet what she wished for. Now she was very, very excited and wouldn’t we all be excited if we found a wishing well like that?

**The complication**

**Teaching focus**

The discussion should emphasise the nature of the problem, or complication, for the mouse in her desire to have her wishes granted. Her hopes were raised, but now they are dashed. Furthermore, she is very surprised to hear the well speak. The author uses the mouse’s reaction, what she says, to exemplify her disappointment.

- The mouse expects to have her wish granted, but instead the well says, **OUCH!**
- This is very disappointing for her: focus on her reaction, how she looks, how she feels
- Posing the alternatives for the mouse in this situation
What you could say

**The mouse expects to have her wish granted but instead the well says, OUCH!**

Now look, a problem happens and that’s just the way stories are. Nothing ever goes very smoothly for the main characters. Look and see, she doesn’t look very happy now, does she? And that’s because the wishing well, instead of granting the wish, has gone *Ouch!* See the word ‘Ouch’ coming out there? And she’s going like this and that’s because the wish hasn’t been granted. All the well did was say *Ouch!* and didn’t give her her wish.

**This is very disappointing for her: focus on her reaction, how she looks, how she feels**

Now how would she feel about that?

**S:** Sad.

**T:** That’s right.

She would feel devastated, she would feel crushed and well, quite devastated I would think because just for a moment she thought she was going to get everything she ever wanted and then with one *Ouch!*, there were her dreams all dashed. So the poor mouse.

**Posing the alternatives for the mouse in this situation**

Now ordinary people might have just gone home and thought well, fancy finding a not-working wishing well, but not this mouse, this was a very clever mouse and she was very, very persistent.

**Teaching focus**

The mouse doesn’t give up on the wishing well. She comes back the next day with another penny and tries again. Each time she comes back the well responds more loudly and the mouse is increasingly dismayed.

- The mouse returns to the well the next day
- The *Ouch!* the well makes is louder this time and the mouse is even more surprised

What you could say

**The mouse returns to the well the next day**

So the next day she hunted around until she found another penny and she came back to the well and she threw her penny in again. Now can you see what happened?

**S:** *Ouch.*

**T:** *Ouch* the well said. A little bit louder than the first time I think.

**S:** *Ouch!*

**T:** Yeah, that’s right, it was just ouch at first and then it was *Ouch!* the second time. Well, home she went again, dashed and disappointed once more, but she still didn’t give up.
The Ouch! the well makes is louder this time and the mouse is even more surprised

S: (inaudible)
T: She didn’t just put it in, she threw it in and this time she has gone [gasp], see her hair is flowing out the back, she has got such a fright and that’s how the illustrator is showing us the fright she got.

Teaching focus

The mouse returns to the well again the next day. In many folk tales, an action is repeated three times. It is as though three is just the right number – it means that the character hasn’t given up, but it isn’t so many that the repetition becomes tedious. In the course of the discussion, the students also need to consider why the well keeps saying Ouch!

- The mouse returns to the well again: she expresses her frustration
- The well doesn’t just say Ouch! this time, it adds a special hint about why it is not granting the mouse’s wishes

What you could say

The mouse returns to the well again: she expresses her frustration
She came back again the next day and did she get her wish the next day?

S: No.
T: No, she did not, and look at the size of that Ouch!
S: OUCH!
T: That’s right, this time though she says something. The other times she walked away disappointed. This time she says I wish this well would not say ouch, but it still says Ouch! and this time the well answers because she has spoken.

The well doesn’t just say Ouch! this time, it adds a special hint about why it is not granting the mouse’s wishes
It says, Ouch! That hurts! And so now she has a clue, and I wonder if any of you know what that clue might be?

S: When she throws the money in hurts the well.
T: Very good. That’s what I think. Now does that sound a sensible thing?

So each penny she threw in, perhaps the first one left a bruise and then the next one she threw in hurt a little bit more and the next time it hurt a bit more, so it’s saying That hurts!
Teaching focus
This page signals the turning point in the story. It is the moment the mouse exhibits her greatest frustration with the well and realises that she can’t just go on throwing pennies into it every day. At this point she could just give up, but readers would expect that she is going to act on the well’s hint.

- The mouse reacts to her three disappointments

What you could say

The mouse reacts to her three disappointments
So the little mouse went away, and as you can see in this picture she is very, very miserable, three enormous disappointments. As you can see, she is sobbing quietly, she is going boo hoo hoo hoo, My wishes will never ever come true this way!

The resolution

Teaching focus
The mouse has thought of a possible solution to the problem of the wishing well not granting her wishes. The illustrator emphasises the poverty of the mouse’s house in this illustration, which, along with her ragged clothes, perhaps reminds readers how desperate she is to use the well. It is also important to emphasise that the mouse doesn’t know for sure that her solution will work. She is just hopeful. In the transcript of the lesson some students very quickly used the illustrations to make accurate predictions about what would happen in the story. However, not all students make these predictions right away, so they need to be discussed.

- The mouse’s possible thoughts as she acts to solve her problem
- The mouse’s home emphasises her poverty
- The mouse takes the pillow from her bed – why?
- The mouse thinks the pillow may help the situation: she doesn’t know whether her plan will work

What you could say

The mouse’s possible thoughts as she acts to solve her problem
But she doesn’t stop there though, she’s thinking all the time and she must have thought I wonder what to do about this. Now let’s see what she does. She’s so clever. I never would have thought of this.
**The mouse’s home emphasises her poverty**
Well she ran home, she ran as fast as she could back to her house and if you look very carefully, remember what I said about her house? It’s got the plaster falling off the walls and she has a candle instead of electricity – no proper lights. She’s just got a candle and a little bed in her house – no proper carpet, just boards. No mat, nothing to put her feet on, on a cold morning.

**The mouse takes the pillow from her bed – why?**
So she runs and takes the pillow from her bed. This is an unusual thing to do, she’s not going to go and sleep by the well. I wonder what she is going to do with that pillow. Would she be thinking soft, this is something soft? Yes?

*S:* (inaudible)
*T:* OK, well done. What do you think?
*S:* She’s going to throw the pillow in the well and then throw the money in.
*T:* OK, right. Yes, well done both of you.

**The mouse thinks the pillow may help the situation: she doesn’t know whether her plan will work**
If I put the soft pillow in the well when I throw the penny in and it lands on the pillow, it won’t hurt. That’s right. Maybe that’s what she is thinking. She says this may help. She’s not sure that it’s going to help, but she’s going to try it out.

**Teaching focus**
The illustration shows the mouse throwing the pillow into the well, implying that she will then throw a penny in on top of the pillow. Her plan works because the next illustration shows her looking happy, and the well says *Ah*. The mouse is now ready to start wishing. It is important to speculate on what the mouse might be thinking as she carries out her plan.

- What the mouse does next – with her pillow and with her next penny
- What happens as a result?

**What you could say**

**What the mouse does next – with her pillow and with her next penny**
So she runs and she throws her pillow into the well, as you said, she throws her penny into the well

**What happens as a result?**
And this time the well says *Ah. That feels much better!* No more bruises and so the mouse says *Good! Now I can start wishing.*
Teaching focus

The purpose of the illustration on this page is to show what the mouse wished for. Readers must infer what her wishes mean for her. However, this is still just the beginning for the mouse. Students often speculate on what else she might wish for.

- What the mouse wished for: discussion
- What else she might wish for

What you could say

**What the mouse wished for: discussion**

And look, from that day on she made many wishes and every one of them came true.

Now we can see …

**S:** She wished what you said.

**T:** We must have some of the same thoughts, that mouse and me.

**S:** Ice-cream.

**T:** Oh, isn’t that funny? She had the same favourite food as me.

Yes, she went right over the top with her wishes. She didn’t just wish for a new dress, she wished for the whole queen outfit! She’s got the crown, she’s got the jewels. So now we know all about that mouse. She looks like she’s had her hair done at the hairdresser and she’s got ringlets.

**S:** She looks like a real queen.

**T:** She does. She’s got everything just right.

**What else she might wish for**

**S:** I wonder what her house turned out like.

**T:** Well, it says that she made many wishes and every one of them came true, so I guess after she fixed herself up she would finish the ice-cream and fix the house up, wouldn’t she?

**S:** (inaudible)

**T:** Fortunately she’d be able to wish for another pillow, wouldn’t she?

**S:** Some more money to make some more wishes.

**T:** That’s right, you’ve got the right idea there.

**S:** Lots more money to make lots more wishes.
Read the story aloud

Following the low order literate orientation, read the story to the class. Show the students where you are reading with a pointer or marking strip of some kind so that they know you are attending to the words. Read the story expressively and if the students want to read with you allow them to do so, but do not slow down and wait for them. Avoid the reading becoming a chant by consistently modelling fluent, expressive reading.

High order literate orientation

Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A mouse once found a wishing well.</td>
<td>In order to start the story, the author:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• introduces the main character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A mouse is a straightforward language choice that takes readers right into the story by naming the main character. It is very simply stated, so readers need to refer to the illustration to find out about the mouse’s appearance or demeanour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• tells when the story happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>once tells readers that this event only ever happened one time, or once. The inference is that it happened a long time ago, when such things as mice talking and dressing in clothes were possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• then writes about what the character did on this one occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>found implies that the mouse must have been out walking or doing something in the vicinity of a place where a wishing well could be found. The choice of this word leaves the reader with the work of imagining the context in which this little mouse finds the wishing well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a wishing well is a language choice that tells readers what the mouse finds – a magic object with infinite possibilities. A world of wonder and delight opens up to the finder of a genuine, working wishing well. There is no indication of how the mouse knows it is a wishing well rather than an ordinary well from which you draw water. She must live in a context where such things are possible: a magical world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Now all of my wishes can come true!” she cried.

To show the extent of the thrill the mouse feels when she finds the wishing well, the author tells us what she says when she finds it. *Now* foreshadows that the mouse is not going to waste any time in starting to wish. *All of my wishes* makes clear that the mouse realises the full extent of her good luck. Not just one or two wishes might come true when you have a wishing well – all of them can! The choice of *can come true* rather than ‘will come true’ shows that the mouse understands that the wishing well offers the possibility that her wishes will come true rather than an assurance that they will. She has to put the penny into the well first, and then the well has to grant her wish. The sentence ends with an exclamation mark to emphasise how excited the mouse feels. *She cried* confirms the mouse’s excitement as she realises the potential of the wishing well to change her life.

What you could say

**Note:** Notice that the teacher does not ask students to underline every word of the text. She has chosen the key words of the first sentence that tell readers who the story is about and what that character is doing. Initially the students read these key words and the teacher reads the others. Other words could be underlined in subsequent lessons or dealt with in transformations. Teachers using the Accelerated Literacy approach need to make decisions about the focus of each lesson. Early in the teaching sequence they should identify and underline words or phrases in the text that will be easily understood by their class.

**The author introduces the main character**

**Preformulation**

*T: So, in this story the author first of all tells us about the mouse. The mouse does something and then she says something all the time in this story. So, the first thing that he tells us about is who the character is and what the story is about.*

*So who is the character that the story is about?*
S: The mouse.
T: OK, if you were looking for the word here, what would be the letter that you would be looking for that starts mouse off?
S: M.
T: Goodness, you are clever. So, if you look on the page for an M, can you see where it says a mouse? Put your hand up if you can see where it says a mouse. Would someone like to come up and draw a line underneath where it says a mouse?

Come on, that would be wonderful, and when you put your hand up I know you are helping. Terrific! And would you like to put a line underneath a as well? This one. Yeah, that’s it. Well done. Good finding. You see it starts off a mouse.

Reconceptualisation

T: We don’t know anything about this mouse yet. It’s not a special mouse, it’s just one little mouse that is going along this day and has this adventure.

The author writes about what the character did on this one occasion – the action

T: Now what was the thing that she found? She found something.
S: A wishing well.
T: OK, and what are we going to be looking for with wishing well? What would be the start of wishing and well?
S: W.
T: Yeah, the w the W. Now can you see where it says a wishing well? OK, great. Now let’s see, would you like to come and underline where it says a wishing well? Underline the a as well because this is just one of the wishing wells in the world that she has found. Brilliant.

OK, now the trick of this is we can share how we read this. Watching? You read the bits that are underlined and I will read the other bits, OK? So we will practise.

S: A mouse.
T: Once found.
S: A wishing well.
T: Fantastic.

The author tells us what the character said – her reaction

T: Now see the talking marks? [Teacher points to them] That tells us that the little mouse is saying something. She’s very excited because what does she think is going to happen now that she’s got a wishing well?
S: She can wish for whatever she wants to.
T: That’s right, and the way that we say it is that your wishes can come true.
So what does it mean when it says your wishes can come true? Do you know what it means? It means that if you wish something, it happens. It means that they will come true. Now let’s have a look at this: How many wishes does she want to come true, do you think?

S: Lots.

T: Lots. That’s right. All her wishes, she wants them all to come true. So can you see in here where it says about her wishes, where it says all of my wishes?

Would someone like to come and underline all of my wishes? I really appreciate that lots of people put their hand up and I know that when lots of people put their hand up they are all working really well, but if I don’t ask you every time don’t be disappointed. That’s it. Well done.

And she wants the wishes to come true straight away? Can anyone see the words that tell us that she wants the wishes to come true straight away? Yes?

S: (inaudible)

T: That’s right. She wants her wishes to come true, doesn’t she? And she wants her wishes to come true now, not later but now. OK, so she says Now all of my wishes can …

S: Come true.

T: Can you underline come true. Because it’s a funny way to say it, isn’t it? Come true. Good work.

OK, and then the last part, that’s the end of her talking, can you see the exclamation mark? She says it in an excited way. Now it doesn’t just say she said, it says she cried.

S: (inaudible)

T: I beg your pardon? Did you want to come and underline that? OK, you come and underline she cried then.

It doesn’t just say she said, because then we would just have to read all of my wishes can come true she said. When you see the exclamation mark and you see the she cried, you read “Now all of my wishes can come true!” she cried! It shows us how excited she was. Now let’s just read this bit.

S: (reads from the book)

T: Very well done. Good work.
She threw a penny into the well.

Now that she has a wishing well at her disposal, the mouse immediately throws a penny into it. Sometimes students predict that the mouse will ‘drop’ the penny. The author may have used the word *threw* here to foreshadow that the penny may hurt the well. The mouse just happened to have a penny with her. It is the size and possible weight of the penny that is important, as a larger coin has more potential to hurt when thrown. Another point to consider here is that a penny is a small amount of money. If the mouse is too poor to buy new clothes then she won’t have much money to spare, although throwing a penny into a wishing well should be a good investment.

She made a wish.

The author tells us that the mouse *made a wish*. This expression means that she asked the well for something she wanted. We just have to imagine what it might be.

“OUCH!” said the wishing well.

Until now the story has been quite straightforward. Now, however, there is a problem. Instead of granting the wish in return for the penny, the well says *Ouch!* We have to imagine the thoughts that go through the mouse’s head at this moment, as they are not expressed in the words. However, it is easy to see in the illustration that she is surprised, and we can all imagine her disappointment. Another important point to note is that the well speaks. A speaking, feeling well is a sure sign that it is a magic one. It is also important to discuss what the word ‘ouch’ means. It is a sign of pain; therefore we can guess that the penny hurts the well when the mouse throws it in.
### 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>The mouse’s next actions: She returns to the well</strong></td>
<td>The mouse must have gone home after her disappointment with the wishing well, perhaps to find another penny, because the action continues <em>the next day</em>. These words at the beginning of the sentence help readers imagine the time sequence. They imply that the mouse went home, thought about what to do, found another penny, went to sleep, had some breakfast and so on. The first time the mouse is mentioned on page 10, she is referred to as <em>the mouse</em>. She hasn’t been given a name, but we know it is the same mouse by the use of the word <em>the</em>. The author tells us that she <em>came back to the well</em>, so we can infer that she remembered the location of the well and that no one else had found it. Because she <em>came back</em>, readers can also infer that the well referred to is the same wishing well, although the wording is simply <em>the well</em> this time.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>She tries to make another wish</strong></th>
<th>The mouse is showing some persistence here, as is usual in stories involving such high stakes. In throwing a penny into the well she repeats her action of the previous day. The wording is easy and predictable for young readers, and tells us what we need to know.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>She threw a penny into the well</em></td>
<td>Again, as on the previous day, the mouse makes a wish. Whether she makes the same wish is left to our imagination. We can imagine also that a certain amount of suspense is building as the mouse, and readers, wait to see if her wish will be granted this time.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>The well’s reaction</strong></th>
<th>Predicably, the result is the same as before. Nevertheless, the illustration provides a clue that the well is hurt more this time than previously.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>“OUCH!” said the well.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The next action in the events sequence</strong></td>
<td>The author starts with the time again, <em>The next day</em>, so we know that the mouse must have gone home, found another penny, slept, eaten, then set out to try to make a wish again. This is the third try and three is often a significant number in stories. Any less and it wouldn’t really be trying, and any more it would be tedious. Additionally, the author tells us that on this third day the mouse came back <em>again</em>, thus strengthening the repetitive nature of the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mouse’s comment</strong></td>
<td>She threw a penny into the well. “I wish this well would not say ouch,” she said. She threw a penny into the well, exactly repeats the mouse’s action of the previous day. This time, however, she makes a wish aloud, <em>I wish this well would not say ouch</em>. This is a tricky strategy on her part. The pattern of the wording also changes, alerting us to the fact that something is about to change in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The well’s reactions</strong></td>
<td>“OUCH!” said the well. “That hurts!” First the well reacts with <em>Ouch!</em> as previously, but then the well too adds something extra. It says, ‘That hurts!’ It seems that the mouse had missed the hint the well had been giving when it said, <em>Ouch!</em> She hadn’t realised that the penny was hurting the well. This time, the well is more explicit about the problem.</td>
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### Teaching focus

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<tr>
<td><strong>Aside: The mouse’s reflections</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| “What shall I do?” cried the mouse. | The author now stops the progress of the event sequence to describe the mouse’s thoughts and feelings. 

*What shall I do?* the mouse asks herself. This is the way characters let readers know what they are thinking. The mouse is very upset. She is a little way away from the well now, and no one else is present. |
| “My wishes will never ever come true this way!” | Here the mouse is letting us know how frustrated she really is. The words *never ever* are used for emphasis. It doesn’t matter how many times the mouse wishes, she won’t get what she wants. She is truly in despair. But the inclusion of *this way* shows us that she realises that just putting pennies in the well won’t work — the wishes won’t come true *this way*. The wording implies that there might be another way that the mouse’s wishes could come true. |

### Teaching focus

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<tr>
<td><strong>Resolution: A series of events that leads to a resolution</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The mouse ran home.</td>
<td>There is a change of pace as the resolution begins. The mouse must have decided what she can do to change the situation. The author tells us that she <em>ran home</em>. The mouse would run home only if she had something urgent to do. So far all the action has taken place at the site of the well; now it has shifted to the mouse’s home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She took the pillow from her bed.</td>
<td>The author does not write about all the thoughts and reasoning behind the mouse’s action. We have to work out for ourselves what the pillow could be for.</td>
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</table>
“This may help,” said the mouse,

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<th>Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>“This may help,” said the mouse,</td>
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<tr>
<td>and she ran back to the well.</td>
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Teaching focus

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<tr>
<td>The mouse carries out her plan</td>
<td>The next step in the mouse’s plan is to see whether the pillow stops the well’s pain so it can grant her wish. She must think the pillow will make a soft landing for the penny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The mouse threw the pillow into the well.</em></td>
<td>The next logical step is to try the plan. The word <em>Then</em> indicates that each event is happening sequentially. The next thing the mouse does is throw a penny into the well. This time, there is no immediate ‘Ouch!’ in response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Then she threw a penny into the well</em></td>
<td><em>and</em> indicates the next step in the sequence. The mouse <em>made a wish</em>. We don’t know what it is, but we could predict that it is that the well will grant wishes again. Still no ‘Ouch!’ The suspense builds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>and made a wish.</em></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

and she ran back to the well.
### Teaching focus

#### Structure of text and wording | Why language choices were made

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The well’s reaction</strong></th>
<th>“Ah. That feels much better!” said the well.</th>
<th>To the mouse’s relief (and ours) the well says, Ah. That feels much better! This reaction shows that the mouse’s clever plan has worked. The well is no longer hurt when a penny is thrown in.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The mouse’s reaction</strong></td>
<td>“Good!” said the mouse.</td>
<td>Predictably, the mouse is pleased that her plan worked. She says, Good to show that she is happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Now I can start wishing.”</td>
<td>The word Now, as on the first page, shows us that the mouse is not going to waste time here. She is going to start wishing from that instant on. I can start wishing also echoes her words on the first page, all of my wishes can come true. At this point, with all her problems solved, she can start wishing properly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Teaching focus

#### Structure and wording | Why language choices were made

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Conclusion</strong></th>
<th>After that day the mouse made many wishes by the well.</th>
<th>After that day serves to sequence the story further. The day the mouse threw the pillow into the well is that day, so it was after that day that the mouse made many wishes by the well. This comment does not tell us exactly when the mouse made wishes; rather, it leaves the time open for us to imagine. The illustration shows us some of the things the mouse wished for – she seems to be quite a materialistic young mouse.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And every one of them came true.</td>
<td>And indicates that there is one more thing to learn here, while every one of them came true is a happy ending because it tells us that the mouse had no more problems with the well. The pillow solved the problem forever.</td>
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</table>
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 preformation.

Transformations – Passage one

It is not necessary to carry out transformations on every sentence of ‘The Wishing Well’. Choose passages that achieve a teaching purpose. The examples below are based on a transcript of the transformations step in the lesson followed so far in these notes. The transformations are carried out on the first page of the story.

Goals of the transformations

There are several reasons for using these short passages for transformations.

Comprehension

The author has used simple language in short sentences so the story is accessible for early readers. As a result, many of the details that enrich the tale are included in the illustrations rather than the words. This feature means that students without much experience with literacy will probably need help to fully understand and enjoy the story.

In the first transformations exercise, comprehension is enhanced through discussion about the function of words like once, found, all and come true. These words were more difficult to isolate in the high order literate orientation, but were easy to discuss in transformations.

Word recognition leading to spelling

To develop word recognition skills it is necessary to cut the segment of text being used into single words to determine whether students can recognise words out of context, which is a prerequisite for successful work on spelling. The focus words for this lesson are mouse and wishing well.
Writing
Authors who write for young children use simple story structures with straightforward orientation, complication, resolution structures. This transformations exercise can be used to demonstrate the kind of information that might be included in the orientation of a folk tale.

Introducing the transformations

Teaching focus
- Explain the activity
- Identify the part of the text to be studied

What you could say

**Explain the activity**
T: Very well done. Good work. So the next thing that we are going to do is look at this page again on some strips of cardboard. Your teacher is so lucky. This must be one of the very best classes in the school, I think. I can’t wait to come again and see you getting cleverer and cleverer.

**Identify the part of the text to be studied**
T: OK, this bit says, A mouse once found a wishing well, and the next bit says how she reacted when she found the wishing well. It tells us how excited she was. Because if it just said a mouse once found a wishing well and she threw a penny in and made a wish, we wouldn’t know how excited she was, would we? We wouldn’t know how she said Now all of my wishes can come true! and we wouldn’t know how she was thinking, what will I wish for first? We still don’t know whether she wished for some ice-cream first or the dress, but I would think the dress myself.

S: I would think the money.
T: Oh! Yes, she actually would have … oh, sorry mate. You OK? Give it a rub.
T2: He’s very brave. He’s already got a broken arm.
T: I can see that, now a broken leg! Good boy. Yeah, alright now, if she was thinking and I would think that she must be because we have been shown what a clever mouse and a thoughtful mouse she was and a good problem solver, so she would probably have made her first wish for lots of money …

S: She couldn’t wish for heaps of wishes if she didn’t wish for the money first.
T: That’s right. I would think that that would have been the first thing she would have to do if she was really thinking about it, because she probably used up all the pennies that she had.
S: She only had one more left.
T: Yeah. That’s right, that’s great, that’s thinking hard.

So what I have done is I have taken those words out and I have put them on here so we can look at them even more closely and we can do things with them here, and we can find out more about how the author wrote this.
Transformations – One

Text (page 8)

A mouse once found a wishing well.

Example of text segmentation

Initially, the sentence could be segmented in the following way. Other segmentations may also be used.

A mouse / once found / a wishing well / . /

Teaching focus

- Identify the name of the character – a mouse
- Function of these words – to tell us who the story is about
- Identify what the story is about – a wishing well
- Function of the words and the punctuation
- Parts of the sentence
- Identify what the mouse did and when
- Function of these words

What you could say

Identify the name of the character – a mouse

Now is there anyone here clever enough to remember how the story starts? What does it tell us about first?

S: About the wishing well

T: That’s right, and we have to know who found the wishing well, so can anyone tell us how it starts – who finds the things in the story?

S: A mouse.

T: Good. Can you come and cut them off. You can just do one cut and keep a mouse together because if you notice the next time we talk about the mouse it says she, then it says the mouse because we know who the mouse is. Fantastic. A good cut and put the scissors back – how grown up. OK, so this is who it is about.

Identify what the story is about – a wishing well

And what was it that she found?

S: A wishing well.

T: That’s right, a wishing well. Who would like to cut off a wishing well? Can you come and cut off a wishing well? That’s the girl. You are the first people in the school to use these boards, so careful.
Function of the words and the punctuation
Would you like to cut the full stop off as well? Because that full stop tells us that it is the end of the bit of information about the mouse. That’s it.

Parts of the sentence
Just put it where the full stop goes. Well done. Good work. Now we’ve got ‘a mouse’ and we’ve got ‘once found’ and we’ve got ‘a wishing well’ cut up into those bits.

Identify what the mouse did and when
There’s another word I want to look at in that first sentence and that’s the word that tells us what’s happened. It doesn’t start off ‘Once upon a time’, does it? It tells us this is something that happened once. Can you see the word that tells us about the time? It says a mouse …

S: Once found.

Function of these words
OK, so once found and the word once is the one that tells us about the time. This happened once and that is instead of saying ‘Once upon a time’ or ‘One day’, we say it happened once and that just means one time, we don’t know when, some time this thing happened. Is there anyone that can see the word once? Could you come and cut it out for me? That would be great. A mouse … once. That’s so good. Good cutting thank you. Well done.

And when it says she found it, it doesn’t say that she went out looking for a wishing well, does it? She wouldn’t look for a wishing well on purpose. Maybe she would never find it if she was looking for it, but she was just walking along and there it was there and she found it.

Transformations – Two
Text (page 8)
“Now all of my wishes can come true!” she cried.

Example of text segmentation
Initially, the sentence could be segmented in the following way. Other segmentations may also be used.

“/ Now / all / of my wishes / can / come true / ! / ” / she cried / . / ”

Teaching focus
• Focus on come true
• Punctuation – function of speech marks and exclamation mark
• Focus on all
• Focus on my
What you could say

**Speech marks**

T: Now let’s have a look at this bit, see how it’s got speech marks there, and where else? At the end of the talking? Would you like to point to the end of the talking? Well done. Excellent. So we know that this is the speech and the author puts that there so we know how excited the little mouse is. And so the author is letting the reader know that the little mouse is getting very excited about what she can do with the wishing well.

**Focus on come true**

T: What is it that she says about the wishes now? She says that they will all ...

S: Come true.

T: That’s right, can someone underline the bit that says come true? Would you like to? That’s lovely working everyone. Can you see the bit that says come true? Who can tell me again what come true means? Yes?

S: It means that it might come true.

T: That’s very good thinking, that word might.

S: It means that it will come, what she wishes for will, she will get.

T: Excellent. It means she will get what she wishes for. The things will come that she wanted.

**Punctuation – focus on speech marks and exclamation mark**

T: Well done. Would you like to cut the other speech mark off for me because you found it. OK, cut the speech marks off and I’m looking for another good cut for the exclamation mark. Speech marks, you see here? That’s the way. Great! Very good cutting. They’re jumpy, aren’t they? That’s the way. Well done. Do you know this word exclamation mark? You’re going to keep helping, aren’t you? That’s great. Can you say that word exclamation mark?

S: Exclamation mark.

T: That’s right. What does it tell us to do? Why is it there? Yes?

S: It makes us say ‘Now all of my wishes can come true!’

T: That’s great, that’s excellent, well done. Would you like to come and cut it off? Yes, see this one just finishes with a full stop but this one is a line with a full stop underneath it, which is an exclamation mark, which tells us we have to read it in an excited way.

S: How do you know if it is a wishing well?

T: Well, I don’t really know how the mouse knew that that well was a wishing well and not an ordinary well for water. I don’t know.

S: Maybe she saw money in it.

T: Maybe, that’s good thinking. I don’t know how she knew but I think maybe if you lived in the times when wishing wells were around, maybe you knew how to recognise them. That’s all I can think. To me it looks like an ordinary well. But as you said, maybe she saw money in it before this story even started.
S: Maybe the thing you turn around with string sort of thing is string and the other is rope. When the water one is rope and the wishing one is string.

T: Oh that’s a very good thought, it could be that. Are you OK? Can you see alright? Great, would someone like to cut the speech marks off the front? Great, you can do that.

Focus on all

T: And there’s a word, can you see the word there that tells us that she wants every one of her wishes to come true? There is a small word that tells us that she wants all of her wishes to come true. What’s this one?

S: All.

T: That’s right, it means every one of her wishes. Would you like to come out and cut out that word all for us? OK, see she doesn’t just want the well to choose which one of her wishes comes true, she wants every one of her wishes to come true and she also wants all my wishes.

Focus on my

T: She doesn’t want other people’s wishes to come true, she just wants her wishes to come true. OK, the next thing we are going to do is, can we all read it through to make sure we have got everything here.

S: (read from text on board)

T: That was beautiful. Now, yes?

S: Would wishing wells still be around?

T: Well, you said that you’ve seen one, didn’t you, but people were putting rubbish in it and it didn’t work, so maybe if you believe really hard in a wishing well. If people put rubbish in it I bet it wouldn’t work. I’ve never seen one myself and I’ve never read about anybody seeing one. It might just be something that happened long ago once. It would be a wonderful thing to find, wouldn’t it?

S: (inaudible)

T: They might be in a secret place that’s right, especially if they don’t like people throwing money in because it hurts. That’s right, they might hide themselves away.

S: Probably somewhere in fairyland.

T: Probably somewhere in fairyland, that’s right. Yes, if everyone threw pillows in it would be good, wouldn’t it?

Additional teaching focuses for passage one

- Word recognition and function of once
- Word recognition and function of a mouse
- Word recognition and function of a wishing well

What you could say

Word recognition and function of once

T: Now let me see if I can trick you. Can you shut your eyes and I’m going to turn some words around. Shut your eyes, open them! Well done. Now I want you to read it without that word, don’t tell me what it is yet. Read it without that word.
S: A mouse found a wishing well.
T: Now the author could have started it off like that and simply said a mouse found a wishing well. But what is the word that is missing here?
S: Once.
T: Well done! Would you like to come out and turn it over and see if you are right. This word once is just like number one, isn’t it? And once means that it happened one time. OK, that’s the thing about once.

**Word recognition and function of a mouse**
T: OK, shut your eyes again. Let’s see what happens this time. Open your eyes! Oh, look at the hands going up already. Read it for me now.
S: Once found a wishing well.
T: Oh, that doesn’t sound any good, does it? We don’t know who found it. What do you think is turned over?
S: A mouse.
T: Would you like to come and turn it over and see if you are right. Are you right? How would we know it says ‘mouse’? What would it start with?
S: M

**Word recognition and function of a wishing well**
T: That’s right. Look that’s it. OK, shut your eyes. Open them! What have I turned over this time? It just says A mouse once found now doesn’t it? It doesn’t tell us what.
S: A wishing well.
T: That’s right, come and turn it over for us, will you? See if you are right. See if she’s right!

**Suggestions for further transformations**

**Suggestion one**

Text (page 9)

*She threw a penny into the well and made a wish. “OUCH!” said the wishing well.*

**Goals of the transformations**

**Comprehension**

This part of the story introduces the complication, or the problem that confronts the mouse. The transformations provide the context for examining the author’s language choices more closely. In the previous transformations, the author used the mouse’s reaction to finding a wishing well to show her delight at her potential good fortune. Now the author uses the well’s reaction, Ouch!, to signal that there is something wrong. This pattern of action and reaction can be clearly discussed through the transformations.
**Word recognition leading to spelling**
This transformation also provides the context to revise the spelling of *wishing* and *well* and pay attention to how to tell one word from the other for early spellers, given that both words start with *w*. It would also be productive to work on *wish* and its relationship to *wishing*. *Threw* and *made* are two other words that could be taught because of the common occurrence of the –ew pattern and the prevalence of a–e, where the e makes the a say its own name.

**Writing**
Teachers intending to make jointly constructed class books about finding magic objects would need to identify and work on the way Arnold Lobel uses an action followed by a reaction to let us into the thoughts of the characters in the story.

Example of text segmentation
Initially, the sentence could be segmented in the following way. Other segmentations may also be used.

*She / threw / a penny / into the well / and / made a wish / . /
“ / OUCH / ! / ” / said the wishing well / . /*

**Language choice**

*She /

threw /

*a penny /

into the well /

and /

**Points for discussion**

We know that the mouse is the main character in this story. We can also tell from the illustration that the mouse is a girl because of her long hair and dress. Now the author refers to her as *She*. Writers use pronouns to make the story sound better. It would be too clumsy to say ‘the mouse’ every time you wanted to mention her in the story. (Note: It isn’t necessary to use the word ‘pronoun’ with students at this level.)

Writers have to choose the best word to describe a character’s action. Here the author chose *threw* rather than ‘put’ or ‘dropped’ to suggest that there was some force involved.

A penny must be the least amount of money it takes to make a wish. A penny is quite a heavy coin when thrown and it is interesting to think about how the mouse came to have a penny with her. Perhaps she always carried one in case she came upon a wishing well.

The author tells us where the mouse threw the penny. He doesn’t say ‘wishing’ well this time, but we know that is the well he means.

The word *and* lets us know there is something else to tell about the mouse.
The expression *made a wish* is a common way to talk about wishing. It really means that the mouse thought of something she wanted and then wished for it. The author expects that readers will know something about the procedures for wishing from other folk tales they have read.

The author has used block capitals and an exclamation mark to emphasise how hurt the well was when the penny landed. However, the mouse obviously didn’t make that connection immediately.

When a character speaks, the author has to indicate who or what spoke. At times in the story the author tells us it is the mouse who speaks and at other times it is the wishing well. Here it is the wishing well. Students need to pay attention to this feature of the text as they read.

**Punctuation**

Cut off the punctuation and discuss it during the course of the transformations. There are speech marks as well as an exclamation mark and full stops. Students need to know what their functions are.

**Suggestion two**

Text (page 11)

*The next day the mouse came back again. She threw a penny into the well. “I wish this well would not say ouch,” she said. “OUCH!” said the well. “That hurts!”*

**Goals of the transformations**

**Comprehension**

This part of the text tells about the mouse’s third attempt to have a wish granted by the wishing well. The author writes about this third attempt a little differently from her first and second attempts by adding extra reactions by both characters. These reactions provide an insight into both the frustration felt by the mouse and the pain felt by the well. These reactions set the scene for the resolution of the story.

**Word recognition leading to spelling**

Many of the words used in the first part of the story are repeated on this page (eg *mouse, ouch, threw, well, wish*). Working on this page provides opportunities to revise these words. In addition, there are two words with an –ay pattern – *day* and *say* – that should be discussed and taught in the spelling part of the teaching sequence.
Writing
Authors foreshadow changes in their writing through language choices such as Arnold Lobel made here when he provided insight into the thoughts of both characters. Rather than simply repeating pages 9 and 10 on page 11, we develop more of an insight into the problems experienced by the mouse and the well. This extra information signals to readers that a resolution is imminent.

Example of text segmentation
Initially, the sentence could be segmented in the following way. Other segmentations may also be used.

The next day / the mouse / came back / again / . /
She / threw / a penny / into the well / . /
“ / I / wish / this well / would not say / ouch / , / ” / she said / . /
“ / OUCH / ! / ” / said the well / . /
“ / That hurts / ! / ” /

Teaching focus
The author has used time to stage this story so that the sequence in which events occur is clear.

The mouse is still the character initiating the action in the tale.

The author repeats the action from the previous attempts. Because this is a book for early readers, he makes this choice to keep the language predictable.

*Again* is added in this instance to emphasise the persistence of the mouse’s action.

Refer back to points about this phrase in Suggestion one.

The mouse speaks her thoughts aloud. She probably needs to do this so that the well knows she hasn’t realised that he is saying ‘Ouch!’ because the penny hurts when she throws it. Authors use this strategy of characters thinking aloud to progress the plot.

We don’t know what the mouse wished on her previous two visits to the well. We know this is an unusual wish made in order to break the stalemate of unproductive visits to the well.
The author identifies the well.

The mouse says that she wants the well to stop saying *Ouch!* She must think that if it stops saying *Ouch!* it will grant her wish, but she hasn’t understood why it is saying this.

Refer back to points about this phrase in Suggestion one.

The mouse’s wish has not been granted. The well still says *Ouch!* Students experienced with stories would be able to predict this reaction.

Refer back to points about this phrase in Suggestion one.

This is the hint the mouse needs to work out what the well’s problem is. The author has to include a hint of this sort to advance the plot.

**Further suggestions**

Page 12 offers the opportunity to study the mouse’s thoughts just before she takes some positive action. The author allows us identify with the mouse’s despair at this point in the story. She has tried three times to get the well to grant her a wish and she has realised that what she has been doing will not work.

Page 13 describes what the mouse decides to do to solve the problem. When she says *This may help*, she shows that she is not certain that her plan will work. ‘May’ is a literate word that is not usually part of everyday conversation.

Page 14 describes the series of actions the mouse performs once she has decided on a plan.

Pages 15 and 16 describe the success of the plan.

**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 a Year 1 level, so it would be reasonable to assume that students studying it would be negotiating the transitional stage of spelling. However, some students could be at an earlier stage of spelling, particularly if they have little reading experience. These students would be learning to recognise and write initial letters before working on words that could help them use visual strategies to notice larger chunks of letters that form common orthographic patterns.

For beginning readers it is also important to teach a bank of high-frequency words that occur in all texts and are important for students’ reading development.

Any of the following words could form the focus of a spelling lesson:

- **Mouse** using the –ou pattern as the starting point, but quickly moving on to the –ouse pattern. Other words with an –ou pattern are ouch and found.
- **Wishing** using the chunks w/ish/ing is another obvious word to use, particularly as wishes and wish occur elsewhere in the text.
- **Well**, broken into w/ell, is another word starting with w that is important in the story.
- **Day** and **say** have the same –ay pattern.
- **Come**, **came**, **made** and **true** all have a final e.
- **Never**, **ever** and **every** all have a common pattern, ever.
- **Well**, **all**, **shall** and pillow can be taught and linked to other –all, –ell and –ill words students may know.

Begin to make class lists of spelling words. Make these flexible, so some words can belong to more than one list.
Examples from the text

Below is a list of spelling words from the text. Teachers will probably make other choices based on their particular needs and spelling goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>–ou–</th>
<th>w–</th>
<th>–ay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m/ou/se</td>
<td>w/ish/ing</td>
<td>d/ay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ou/ch</td>
<td>w/ish/es</td>
<td>s/ay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f/ou/nd</td>
<td>w/ish</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>w/ell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–e</td>
<td>–ever–</td>
<td>–all/–ill/–ell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>com/e</td>
<td>n/ever</td>
<td>w/ell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cam/e</td>
<td>ever</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mad/e</td>
<td>ever/y</td>
<td>sh/all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tru/e</td>
<td></td>
<td>p/ill/ow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Etymology

Students always find etymological information interesting. For example, ‘penny’, the English coin, was originally set at one-twelfth of a shilling. Pennies were first made of silver, then of copper, then bronze. There are two plural forms of the word: ‘pennies’ for individual coins, and ‘pence’ collectively. It translates into various foreign coins of small denomination, including the Latin *denarius*, whence comes its abbreviation, d.

Many websites, as well as dictionaries and other books, provide etymological information. Two informative websites are [http://www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com) and [http://www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com).

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.
Students in the phonetic stage of spelling

Students in their first year of school, in the phonetic stage of spelling development, will still be learning to recognise words and write letters. The physical demands of forming letters are quite high for many of these students, especially combined with the cognitive demands of remembering the names of letters and sounds, so they will need support with word recognition, handwriting and spelling.

Joint reconstructed writing is undertaken using either a blackboard or whiteboard, or a sheet of butcher’s paper that everyone can see. The students write some letters of each word and the teacher writes the rest. Students could also write letters on small whiteboards or blackboards before they contribute to the joint writing.

**Steps in joint reconstructed writing**

The book should be readily available for easy reference. The teacher explains to the students that together they are going to try to write the story the way Arnold Lobel did, and that they will start by telling readers who the main character is.

The teacher asks the students if they can remember how the story starts. When someone has answered with ‘A mouse’, the teacher shows the class where to start writing and explains that it is necessary to start the sentence with a capital ‘A’. The teacher can write the word or ask a student to come and write it on the board or paper. The teacher reminds the students that Arnold Lobel started with A and not ‘The’ because this is the first time readers meet the mouse. ‘The’ can be used thereafter because readers now know that the mouse means this particular mouse and not any other.

The teacher goes on to ask the students to help write mouse. If the students can write the word, the teacher asks them to help write the parts they know. The teacher talks about the word in chunks – m, ouse – and asks someone to write m, someone else to write ou, and someone else to write se or ouse. The teacher reminds the class that Arnold Lobel shows his readers how the mouse looks through the pictures rather than the words.

The teacher then asks the students what word the author has used to tell readers that this story happened only one time. When writing once, the teacher reminds students that this word is related to the number one, and that it doesn’t start with w.

The lesson continues like this until the passage has been reconstructed. Discussion should include what words come next, what letter or letters each word starts with, what letters come next and how to write them, and why the author has used a particular word or words.
Students in the transitional stage of spelling

These students, who are usually in Year 1 (age 6), may be able to write many letters independently. They may also know some of the letters that go together to form English letter patterns, such as m/ouse and w/ish/ing.

These students can work with the teacher on jointly reconstructing parts of the text, with the teacher working on the blackboard, whiteboard or butcher’s paper while they write in individual writing books.

**Steps in joint reconstructed writing**

The discussion about the author’s word choices continues as described above, along with discussion about spelling patterns and letter formation. These students, however, write in their books, while the teacher writes on the board or butcher’s paper. Teachers may allow time for students who already know how to write a word to do so before writing it themselves. In this way students can choose to write what they know or wait for the teacher. The teacher should be careful that students copying a word do so by writing it in its chunks, rather than letter by letter.

Joint reconstructed writing provides a transition from spelling activities to writing activities.

**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 ‘The Wishing Well’ would include:

- overall goals such as jointly constructing a class book about a character who discovers a magic object and makes it work for them
- short-term goals such as writing about an action followed by a reaction in speech.

As this story will be taught to students in early childhood classes, Year 1 in particular, the main writing activities will consist of joint construction of class books that become additional reading material for the class. The theme for the class books would be based on a character finding a magical object that brings good luck to the finder once a basic problem has been resolved.
Joint construction allows the teacher to assist students by ‘thinking aloud’ about the way an author plans and writes short narratives. Joint construction of class books is a particularly appropriate writing activity for Year 1 students, for whom the physical and cognitive demands of writing are great. Students of this age not only have to think about what to write, they also have to remember how to form letters and spell words correctly. For students in the transitional stage of spelling, negotiating the possible spellings of words takes confidence and a range of spelling resources.

Possible steps in jointly constructing a class book

- Read other folk tales that involve magic objects to the class. Discuss the orientation, complication and resolution structure of these tales during reading.
- Discuss how each author must have planned her or his folk tale.
- Explain that the class is going to plan and then write a folk tale.
- Discuss a character who is poor or needy in some way and what sort of things that character might wish for.
- Discuss some possible magic objects. There must be a way of invoking each object’s magic, and it must be possible that things could go wrong.
- Discuss the event sequence.
- Have students work in groups to illustrate the sequence (undertake illustration tasks in art lessons). Sequence the illustrations and discuss the sequence.
- Discuss possible text for each illustration, but don’t start to write yet. Here the class should reach agreement on the story sequence.
- When everyone has agreed on the story sequence and how it will work, start to write.
- Carry out the writing jointly and remind students about the strategies that can be used (eg using characters’ reactions to let readers know what they are thinking). Allow students to write the words they know.

Jointly constructing a folk tale could take up one or more sessions of Accelerated Literacy. For a joint construction of this nature the teacher needs to prepare some examples ahead of the lesson to help get the activity started.

The outcome of the joint construction will be a class book that everyone can read. While more than one joint construction can be undertaken before students are asked to write independently, students in Year 1 or younger do not have to be able to write a folk tale by themselves.
Appendices
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.
## Class: Year 1  
**Term: 1**

**Week: 1**

**Text:** ‘The Wishing Well’ in *Mouse Tales* by Arnold Lobel

### Teaching focus:
Engage the students in reading ‘The Wishing Well’.

<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>Low order literate orientation</td>
<td>Revisit the story of ‘The Wishing Well’ with the students’ help. See what they can remember about the story.</td>
<td>Talk through the story again and focus on the orientation, complication, resolution structure and encourage the students to remember what they know.</td>
<td>Ask the students some questions about the story overall, then go to the picture where the mouse comes back the next day. Explain that this is the page you are going to work on.</td>
<td>Look at the pictures of the mouse coming back to the well. Discuss how the well says ‘Ouch!’ more loudly each time. Discuss what changed the way the story was going.</td>
<td>Talk about the mouse crying. Discuss why she didn’t give up trying to work out the problem with the well. What was she thinking of as she cried?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

### High order literate orientation
Finish high order literate orientation page 8, then look at page 9. Focus on how the actions of the mouse are followed by a reaction in speech.

### Transformations
Review the transformations undertaken on Friday, then continue with the mouse’s reaction. “/ /Now all my wishes can come true!/1/” she cried./ /

### Spelling
Practise ‘wish/ing’ and ‘m/ouse’, then look at how ‘wish/ing’ can be used to spell ‘wish’ and ‘wish/ies’. Then spell ‘found’ and relate to ‘m/ouse’.  
Jointly reconstruct: A mouse once found a wishing well.

### Writing
Jointly discuss some things that would make you very happy, then think of what you would say in reaction. Both the teacher and students work out what to say and the teacher writes for the group.

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*Sample weekly plan*
Sample lesson plan

Class: Year 1    Week: 1    Term: 1

Purpose of lesson

- Literate orientation on ‘The Wishing Well’ by Arnold Lobel
- Use transformations and spelling to engage the students in developing concepts about print and decoding skills

Lesson 2 – Teaching sequence

Low order literate orientation
Tell the story of ‘The Wishing Well’, with the students contributing what they remember from the previous session. Discuss:

- the significance of the little mouse’s worn clothing and how she would feel to discover a well that would grant wishes
- how she must have felt when the well said, Ouch! and failed to grant her wish
- why she kept coming back to the well even though it kept saying, Ouch!
- how she discovered what was upsetting the well
- what she decided to do to try to solve the problem with the well
- how she succeeded
- what she wished for.

High order literate orientation
Focus on the first page. Reorient the first sentence – who the story is about, what she finds, when the story took place. Go on to discuss the language choices in the mouse’s reaction.

- Now (The mouse doesn’t want to wait for the wishes. She wants to have them granted now.)
- all of my wishes (The mouse wants everything – all she wishes for.)
- can (are able to)
- come true (She is looking forward to having all the things she is going to wish for.)

Go on to the next page if appropriate.

Transformations
Continue with the first page. Focus on the author’s language choices and the reasons for them (eg Turn over ‘now’ and see what difference it makes to the meaning of the story. Link it to ‘once’ and point out how both are to do with time. Turn over ‘can’ and see what difference it would have made if the author had written ‘might’ or ‘will’).
**Spelling**
Cut transformations into single words and play word recognition games. Revise the words *wishing well* and *mouse*. Chunk and spell *n/ow*, *w/ish/es* and *tr/ue*.

**Writing**
Write the first two sentences together or just the first sentence, depending on the time available.
We would take some blankets, a couple of books and some tea and sugar.
The Wishing Well (184 words)

A mouse once found a wishing well.

“Now all of my wishes can come true!” she cried.

She threw a penny into the well and made a wish.

“OUCH!” said the wishing well.

The next day the mouse came back to the well.

She threw a penny into the well and made a wish.

“OUCH!” said the well.

The next day the mouse came back again.
She threw a penny into the well.

“I wish this well would not say ouch,’ she said.

“OUCH!” said the well.

“That hurts!”

“What shall I do?” cried the mouse.

“My wishes will never ever come true this way!”

The mouse ran home.

She took the pillow from her bed.

“This may help,” said the mouse,
and she ran back to the well.

The mouse threw the pillow into the well.

Then she threw a penny into the well and made a wish.

“Ah. That feels much better!” said the well.

“Good!” said the mouse.

“Now I can start wishing.”

After that day the mouse made many wishes by the well.

And every one of them came true.
Early Childhood

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 1. However, they could also be used in the second half of kindergarten (first year of school) and in Year 2 where students have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

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

• read the story studied fluently and interpret the illustrations at a high level
• 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.

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