Lower Primary

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 4. 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](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

Babe

Lower Primary
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text


Babe
Synopsis of the story

Babe is a most unusual young pig who is won at a fair by a most unusual farmer. He is soon befriended by a motherly collie dog, who teaches him everything he needs to know about the work of sheep-dogs. Add to this Babe’s impeccable manners, excellent listening skills, loyalty and determination and you have a sheep-pig good enough to win the Grand Challenge Sheep-Dog Trials. In the course of the book, Babe also saves the flock from sheep rustlers and sheep worriers and becomes generally a very important contributor to the farm. Of course, this means Babe has changed his destiny and will never end up as Christmas ham, which is a happy ending for all concerned.

Theme

_Babe_, like a modern fable, features animals as the main characters and celebrates virtues such as hard work, impeccable manners, loyalty and good listening skills. By having a pig excel in a role usually performed by dogs, it shows that it’s ok to be different and do things that others don’t necessarily expect.

Why use this story?

Packed with characters whose varied and contrasting characteristics are well portrayed, _Babe_ is an entertaining and uplifting narrative with plenty for students to enjoy, including:

- the personification of animals
- the idea that hard work and goodwill can are enough to excel
- reading dialogue written to imitate a country dialect
- details about sheep farming and sheep herding trials
- illustrations, which enrich the text.

Structure of the text

Babe is a narrative with a orientation/complication/resolution structure. Dick King-Smith tells the story from the perspective of an outside narrator, sympathetically interpreting the characters’ actions and thoughts for the reader. The thoughts, actions and motivations of the characters are often revealed through dialogue.

Orientation: Chapter 1

We meet Babe and Farmer and Mrs Hoggett, and learn that the story is to take place on a sheep farm. The complication is foreshadowed as the farmer’s wife discusses her plans to butcher Babe for a Christmas feast. Already the reader is curious to know how the pig, who is the hero of the story, can escape this fate.
Complication: Chapters 2-9

We meet some more important characters, including Fly the sheep-dog, who teaches Babe to become a sheep-pig. In having Babe acquire this talent, King-Smith foreshadows the resolution to the problem: this highly intelligent pig is worth a lot more to the Hoggetts alive than on a dinner table.

Resolution: Chapters 10-12

Against all odds, Babe wins the British Sheep-dog Trials, so securing for himself a fruitful life on the farm.

Language features of the text

Passage one

This detailed description of the stables helps give readers a mental image of the farm. King-Smith portrays Mr Hogget, the owner of the farm, as a kind, intelligent and caring farmer.

Description moving from the general to the particular

The author first describes the whole stables, then narrows the readers’ focus to just one part of it, a loose-box.

Description of a setting to create a desired atmosphere or ambience

In the case of the description of the stables, the atmosphere created is that of a safe, secure environment that shelters happy animals. It could just as easily have been written in a way that made the stables seem run down and shabby. In that case, readers would have developed different perceptions about the farmer.

Passage two

In this passage King-Smith wrote about Babe’s changed status with Farmer and Mrs Hogget following his defence of the sheep from the sheep-worrier dogs. It illustrates the use of the conjunction, because. Dick King-Smith uses it effectively in the text to list the reasons why Babe had gained the status of a top sheep-dog. Because is placed first in each sentence and repeated four times to make absolutely clear to readers what changed for Babe after he saved the sheep for the second time and what consequences came from the changes.

Books with similar themes

A book with a similar theme is Charlotte’s Web by E.B. White.
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 *Babe* 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, short passages describing the attributes of a place in a way that evokes a specific atmosphere, and explaining the consequences of an action/s.

**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**

The first aim of low order literate orientation would be to read the whole story in stages, as quickly as practicable, with an orientation to each chapter. Include a discussion before and after each chapter to make sure students understand the inferences.
Low order literate orientation on *Babe* will include discussions on:
- the setting and structure of the text
- the theme
- the characters (motivations and relationships)
- inferences and interpretations.

Dick King-Smith writes about what characters say in their English country accents and so we have *theseyer* for these and *meself* for myself. When the sheep speak they speak with very broad country accents. The accents are quite endearing and show the closeness of these characters to the countryside. They are not sophisticated at all.

The movie of the book makes some changes to the characters but keeps to the spirit of the story well.

**Teaching focus**
- Discuss the type of story this is. Discuss the moral or theme of the story.
- Refer to other similar stories the class has read, or read some during the teaching sequence on *Babe*.
- Explain why studying this story will benefit the students.
- Give a brief overview of the story.

**What you could say**

**Preformulation**
*T:* This is a story about a very special pig who was lucky enough to be won in a raffle by a very special farmer. In fact, all the characters are unusual in this story.

**Question:** Can you see Babe the pig talking to some of the other animals on the cover here?

**Reconceptualisation**
That’s right. The important characters here are the pig, Babe. Then we have the sheep-dog. She is called Fly and she mothers Babe and teaches him everything he needs to know to work with sheep. You can see one sheep here and she is very important as she explains to Babe the sheep’s point of view.

**Question:** Can you see there are humans on the cover too?

**Reconceptualisation**
They are the farmer and his wife. They are unusual because they see that Babe has more potential than just being their Christmas roast dinner.
Preformulation

T: So this story is all about the animals and the farmer and his wife discovering how special Babe really is. It’s also about Babe’s determination to change his destiny and the way he does this by hard work, cleverness and beautiful manners.

So in the first chapter we meet Mrs Hogget first. She talks a lot but she also works hard and does her job very well. Then we meet Farmer Hogget, who doesn’t talk much at all but does a lot of thinking and is not afraid of doing things a little differently to everyone else. We also find out that there is a fair on at the moment and Farmer Hogget takes all Mrs Hogget’s jams and so on in to be sold. He enters a competition to win a pig and something happens to let us know that he will have a special relationship with this pig. When I read this chapter, notice how the pig reacts when the farmer picks him up.

Question: Mrs Hogget is a really good cook. What do you think she would like to do with a pig if she won it?

Reconceptualisation

Yes. She would like to fatten it up and then slaughter it to put in the freezer so they will be able to eat lots of pork during the year, and have a nice ham for Christmas dinner. So that would be a problem for Babe, wouldn’t it? At the end of this chapter, we learn that Farmer Hogget does win the pig. I’ll read Chapter 1 now. Listen for the way the author lets us know that the pig somehow understands that this farmer would be a kind owner.

Teaching focus

Chapter 1 introduces the main characters and lets us know something about them and about where the story takes place. We meet Mrs Hogget and Farmer Hogget and we find out how they come to own a small scrawny piglet. We find out that Mrs Hogget is a very, very talkative woman and that Farmer Hogget says very little. They live on a farm near a country village and the story starts at a time when there is a fundraising fair on in the village. We also find out that Farmer Hogget is a kind and gentle man who is trusted by animals and that, when he enters a raffle to guess the weight of a frightened little piglet, Mrs Hogget knows just what she would do with it if he wins.

Read Chapter 1 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.

Discussion

• What sort of person is Mrs Hogget?

Being talkative doesn’t mean that she is silly. She just chats about what she is thinking. She is probably friendly and she is a busy person because she has made jam, pickles, preserves and cakes for the fair. She doesn’t waste anything. She makes jam to use up fruit and vegetables and keep them for when they are needed, and she would know how to use all the parts of a pig to cook and eat. This is just what would be expected of a good farmer’s wife.
What do we learn about Farmer Hogget?
He doesn’t talk much. Mrs Hogget always knows what he is going to say. The piglet trusted him. There may have been something about him that animals like.

What do we learn about the piglet?
It is noisy and doesn’t like being handled. It has bright intelligent eyes, so we know from the start that this is no ordinary piglet. It doesn’t squeal when it is held by Farmer Hogget, and this leads us to expect that they will have a special relationship.

What do we learn about the setting for the story?
The Hoggets live on a sheep farm close to a village where a fair is being held.

Teaching focus
This chapter introduces Fly, Farmer Hogget’s sheep-dog, and her pups into the narrative. Readers see the arrival of the piglet through their eyes. Fly realises immediately why Farmer Hogget would keep a pig and she explains this to her pups by saying that people only eat stupid animals. However, later when she looked at the piglet she wasn’t so sure. She felt sorry for the piglet and befriended it. Farmer Hogget was very surprised to find that his sheep-dog was caring for a piglet and even more surprised when he called the sheep-dog and the piglet came too. Something strange was happening here. This chapter sets up the special relationship between the piglet, now called Babe, and the sheep-dog, Fly.

Read Chapter 2 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.

Discussion
How does the author make Fly seem to be so kind and motherly?

From the start of the chapter, Fly is described as a good mother. She knows exactly how to care for her pups. She knows when it was time to begin their training to be sheep-dogs and she knows exactly how to do the training, starting with ducks. She answers their questions even when she doesn’t quite know the answers. When they ask what the boss will do with the piglet, she knew he would eat it when it was big enough but she has to make up an answer as to why he wouldn’t eat the puppies when they were big enough. In every way she behaves like a good human mother, in fact.

In addition, she cared about the pig. She realised it missed its mother and offered to look after it. She licked his little snout with a warm rough tongue, her plumed tail wagging.

Fly is also seen by Mrs Hogget as being an animal who would mother anything, kittens, ducklings, baby chicks.
Why is it important to describe Fly as a compassionate, motherly character?

In this story, Babe starts off as a piglet that is going to be fattened up and killed for his two hams, two sides of bacon, pork chops, kidneys, liver, chitterlings (small intestines), trotters and blood for black pudding. For his future to be any different, there has to be something different about him that makes him more valuable alive than dead. This chapter starts the process of turning him into this different pig. He has to have someone to help him become different and Fly is the agent of change.

How are Mr Hogget and Mrs Hogget developed as characters in this chapter?

Farmer Hogget’s kindness is highlighted when he expresses regret at the thought that the piglet would become ham. Mrs Hogget went back to her kitchen, shaking her head all the way across the yard at the thought of her husband’s soft-heartedness.

How is the setting developed in Chapter 2?

The stables are the setting for this chapter. They are described as a useful place for storing things. They don’t house horses anymore, so we realise that, while the story may not be set in the twenty-first century, it is set in a time when horses are no longer used to work on the farm. The stables are then developed as a welcoming home for all sorts of animals and then a home for Fly and her puppies and Babe.

Teaching focus

In this chapter Babe becomes accustomed to the rules of living on the farm, the puppies leave home and Babe decides to be a sheep-pig.

Fortunately for Babe, Fly was fond of him and decided to care for him. She decides to take care of Babe for several reasons. First, Babe is very good natured and polite. This facet of his personality is developed throughout the book. Later, it is his politeness that the sheep love and it is the reason why they do what he wants. Secondly, Fly’s own puppies have to leave home. They have learned all she has to teach them and she knows the farmer will sell them. She doesn’t resent this but she feels a pang to see each go. Babe becomes like another one of her children in this chapter. Thirdly, Fly felt sorry for Babe. She knew that in about six months he’ll be fit to kill.

With Fly’s help, Babe learns how the farm runs, where everything is located and how he should behave. Fly and Farmer Hogget also notice how quickly Babe learns.

Fly wants the farmer to allow Babe to run around with her instead of being shut up, so she teaches him how to behave like a good dog. She doesn’t expect that Babe could really become a sheep-pig.
Gradually, Babe becomes more like a dog than a pig in his behaviour and at the end of the chapter, when the puppies are all bought by other farmers, he makes the decision that he will be like them. They have all gone off to be sheep-dogs. Babe knows he could learn as well as them so he decides to be a sheep-pig.

Read Chapter 3 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.

Discussion

It is interesting to note at this point that the book *Charlotte’s Web* is also about a pig destined to be killed for food. He is saved by a spider, who realises that he has to have something special about him to make it worth the farmer’s while to keep him. Similarly, the only way Babe can be saved is by being special enough to be worth more alive than dead. The qualities that make Babe special – politeness, intelligence and diligence – are the qualities that ultimately save his life.

Teaching focus

In this chapter Babe starts his education as a sheep-pig. He learns what Fly has to teach him but he also makes friends with a sheep (Ma) who teaches him a sheep’s perspective of the relationship between a sheep-dog and sheep.

The first part of the chapter relates Babe’s first attempts to be a sheep-pig. Fly started him practising on the ducks. Babe found that difficult. He couldn’t understand why they wouldn’t do what he wanted them to do. Fly explains that a sheep-dog has to know how to dominate other animals and make them do what he wants.

The next part of the chapter describes Babe’s meeting with his first sheep. He calls her Ma (from *maaaaa*) and spends some time talking to her while she is in the loose-box in the stable getting over foot rot and a nasty cough. It is during Babe’s conversations with Ma that readers learn about the usual relationship that exists between sheep and sheep-dogs. Ma explains that sheep call sheep-dogs ‘wolves’ because they are nasty, bossy animals that *Nag, nag, nag all day long, go here, go there, do this, do that.* She also explains the difference between ordinary rude dogs (or wolves) and ‘worriers’ that chase sheep and kill them.

Finally, Ma explains how she feels about being treated badly by wolves. She explains that sheep aren’t really stupid. They just *get confused.* Significantly, she tells Babe that *if you was to come out into the field, a nice well-mannered young chap like you, and ask me to go somewhere or do something, politely, like you would, why, I’d be only too delighted.*

Read Chapter 4 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.
Discussion
This chapter really draws out the difference in Fly’s approach (dominating sheep) and Babe’s approach (asking nicely). The author is developing Babe, Fly and Ma as animal characters with people’s feelings and behaviour. After reading this chapter to the class, teachers could discuss how Fly could be so kind to Babe but so dominating and bossy to the sheep.

Teaching focus
This chapter starts a month after the beginning of the story by reminding readers how Mrs Hogget felt about Babe. She only thought of him as ham and bacon. She had no fond feelings for him at all. When she saw Babe running around chasing ducks, all she could think was he would be losing weight rather than fattening up. She couldn’t understand why Farmer Hogget didn’t shut him in the barn. She didn’t realise that Farmer Hogget was becoming fond of the little pig. He really enjoyed watching him with Fly. Fly continued teaching Babe the ways of a sheep-dog and Babe continued to talk to Ma and came to understand the way sheep felt about their lives. Babe enjoyed talking to Ma and was just waiting for an opportunity to meet the other sheep when something happened that changes the whole direction of Babe’s life.

The author uses chapters 1-4 as an orientation to Babe and the other main characters in the story. By the end of Chapter 5, however, Babe’s status changes from being just a piglet being fattened up for Christmas ham to a hero with the status of a fully-fledged sheep-dog. The author achieves this change in status by describing an incident where sheep rustlers attempt to steal Farmer Hogget’s sheep. Babe’s actions save the sheep and drive away the rustlers with their dogs. This is the act that makes him a hero and an asset to the Hoggets.

Teaching focus
In this chapter, Farmer Hogget tries out Babe’s skills as a sheep-pig and finds that he is even better at herding sheep than a sheep-dog.

Perhaps seeing Babe round up ducks had put the idea into Farmer Hogget’s head but when he set out to work with the sheep, he took Babe with him as well as Fly. He was not disappointed because he found that Babe was even better than Fly at getting sheep to follow instructions. What Farmer Hogget and Fly didn’t know was that Babe was using his own special skill to do the job. He didn’t boss and harass the sheep, he talked to them politely and explained what he wanted them to do. Farmer Hogget started to think deeply about his new sheep-pig.
Teaching focus

In Chapter 7, Farmer Hogget thinks about Babe’s skill with sheep and wonders whether he might even be able to use him at a proper sheep-dog trial. He doesn’t make up his mind all at once but makes a few preparations just in case. First of all, he tries out Babe on a lead to see if he could be controlled in a crowd. Then he takes him to observe a sheep-dog trial from a distance. Both these experiments work out well.

Readers also learn from this chapter that Farmer Hogget is a cautious man. He didn’t rush into entering a sheep-dog trial, he thought about the situation carefully. We also learn that Fly didn’t mind the fact that Babe had taken over a lot of her work. Because he was so thoughtful and polite, and because she had taught him all his skills, she was proud of what he could do. Nevertheless, she couldn’t really believe that the little pig with his *jerky little rocking-horse canter* could do the job of a real sheep-dog.

Teaching focus

Chapter 8 starts off quietly with Farmer Hogget setting up a practice course for Babe to practise sheep-dog trial skills. Farmer Hogget taught him the skills he needed for sheep-dog trials and Fly worked on his fitness. She knew what fitness he would need to compete against dogs in a real sheep-dog trial.

Just as their plans were going well, however, something terrible happened. Ma, Babe’s sheep friend, was killed by ‘worriers’, dogs that attack and kill sheep. Babe drove them off but wasn’t in time to save Ma. That was bad enough but worse, it looked as though Babe himself had been the sheep worrier.

Chapter 9 starts with a grim situation for Babe as a cold and forbidding Farmer Hogget took him into the stables. Farmer Hogget carried a gun although Babe didn’t know what it was or why he was in trouble. Just at the last moment Babe was saved by a phone call to Mrs Hogget that warned of sheep-worrying dogs in the area. Farmer Hogget realised that Babe wasn’t responsible but had actually driven off the dogs and saved the majority of his sheep.

Even Fly had been anxious about whether Babe had become a sheep-worrier and, in her efforts to find out from the sheep what had happened, she was forced to be polite to the sheep. They were amazed that a ‘wolf’ could speak politely to them but they did tell Fly that Babe had actually saved them from the sheep worriers and she was very relieved.
Chapter 10 describes the final preparations for the Grand Challenge Sheep-dog Trials. There was the practice that Babe did with Farmer Hogget and the sheep until he knew every procedure for competing in the trial. There were also the talks Babe had with Fly about what to do and how to behave. Fly had one big worry, though, that she didn’t tell Babe. She was worried that strange sheep would not obey him like their own farm sheep did. She didn’t think there would be time for Babe to make friends with the sheep-dog trial sheep and that, since he couldn’t run as fast as a dog, he would lose time. Fly went to ask the sheep about it since, now she had learned to be polite, they were on quite good terms with her. They taught her the special sheep password that would act as a signal to the strange sheep to listen to Babe. Then she taught it to Babe. Both Fly and Farmer Hogget were satisfied that he was ready for the trials.

Teaching focus

Chapter 10 begins the description of the day of the sheep-dog trials. First of all, Farmer Hogget bathed Babe and made him look as clean as he could. Then he had breakfast with Mrs Hogget. She knew he was going to the trials but did not know that Babe had been entered. Farmer Hogget was a man of few words and had not thought it necessary to explain his idea to her. He just gave her a hint of when to watch the trials on TV.

After breakfast he set out with Fly and Babe in the Land Rover. Readers share the sheep-dog trials with Mrs Hogget as she watches it on television. The author takes this view of the event because it gives the announcer the job of describing the course and the work the dogs have to do to complete it. In this way, readers come to the end of Chapter 11 understanding the language of sheep-dog trials and understanding the difficulty of the job Babe will have to do to win the trials.

Teaching focus

The last chapter is the culmination of the whole story and the most moving. It describes how Babe and Farmer Hogget won the trials.

Fly, Farmer Hogget and Babe started off watching from the Land Rover, as Farmer Hogget and Babe were the last competitors. There was a stunned reaction when Babe ran onto the course but the judges couldn’t find anything in the rulebook that said that a pig couldn’t compete. Spectators were amused at first but soon realised they were seeing something extraordinary. The password gave Babe the introduction to the sheep he needed and his performance was perfect.
In this story, Babe’s good manners, hard work and dedication produced the result he wanted. Farmer Hogget’s kindness, patience and trust were rewarded. Fly’s kindness to a lonely little pig, generosity in handing over her job to him and her readiness to swallow her pride and speak to sheep politely paid off and Mrs Hogget was happy and proud of Mr Hogget.

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 passages

Once you have made a start on reading the book and have read at least the first two chapters, return to Chapter 2 to start looking at the author’s language choices in closer detail. Following is a more focused low order literate orientation on passage one.

Low order literate orientation – Passage one

Teaching focus

Text (page 18)

In this passage, focus on the way Dick King-Smith provides a detailed description of the stables which influences the readers’ opinion of the farm and the farmer. The description produces a pleasant, rural, nurturing atmosphere.

The building where Babe was first carried to was called the stables, although it had not actually housed horses for many years. Farm horses wear metal shoes nailed to their feet and so these would make a ringing sound when they clopped on the floor, which was probably paved with stone or brick. When farmers stopped using horses for transport or work, they still had uses for their old stables and wouldn’t think of pulling them down, because they are so useful for storing things. Stables are designed for horses, so there are mangers for their oats and hay, and loose boxes where they can sleep safely out of bad weather. They also need to be quite large because horses are such big animals. They need to be dry and warm, and filled with comfortable straw and nice farm smells. There would be insects and so on for the hens of the farm to forage for and old hay in the mangers would make the perfect nest for their eggs. This would be an easy place for the farmer and his wife to collect their eggs. Swallows like to build nests under roofs on the beams and they need mud for this. They get this from the duck pond. It is said that swallows bring good luck, so this adds to the pleasant, safe feeling the author is building up about these stables. Even rats and mice, which are usually not wanted, play a part in the
description by being content in this environment until cats kill them. After all, the cats are only doing their job, as all animals on a farm must. After the general description of the building the author then describes one end of the stables.

The loose boxes used to have horses in them, but are now used to keep all sorts of other farm animals in. One is for the dogs and the other is for various animals, which need shelter and locking away. So sometimes it’s used for sick sheep and this is where the farmer thinks he will keep this pig he plans to fatten up for eating. He can’t just run wild round the farm; he would be a pest then and not fatten up enough. The farmer doesn’t realise at first just how special Babe is. But he soon finds out.

Complete the teaching sequence, high order literate orientation, transformations, spelling and writing on passage one before beginning work on passage two.

Low order literate orientation – Passage two

Teaching focus

Text (page 88)

In this passage, focus on the way King-Smith lists reasons for changes in circumstances for the inhabitants of the farm. The author uses the word ‘because’ to emphasise the cause and effect relationship. The reader is provided with an explanation for Babe’s changed situation.

After the sheep-worrying incident, the farmer and his wife felt renewed respect and appreciation for their clever pig. So now Babe had saved the flock twice, once from rustlers and once from dogs. Farmer and Mrs Hogget now had these powerful reasons for spoiling Babe and giving him lots of food and other privileges. Mrs Hogget positively doted on him, and even had him in the house just like any other clever (house trained) and valued sheep-dog.

And because the farmer more often than not finds himself thinking of the pig as if he was a dog, he even feeds him dog food rather than pig food. However, Babe had been put on a diet and exercise regime by Fly and had begun to enjoy his speed and agility. So he was not about to change that by overeating. He was able to achieve this because he was so strong minded and disciplined.

Then there is the reason why Fly and the chickens and ducks and even the mice and rats became so fat. That is because they ate all of Babe’s leftovers. Full tummies made these animals happy.

In fact, everyone on the farm seems to be happier since Babe has come to live there. Farmer and Mrs Hogget both agree that Babe has more brains than any dog. And with Babe actually doing all the sheep work on the farm, the farmer will now turn to his secret project: to enter his clever pig in a sheep-dog trial.
High order literate orientation – Passage one

Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording.</th>
<th>Why language choices were made in the text.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A general statement about the stables</td>
<td>This general information about the stables establishes their use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The floor of the stables had not rung to a horse’s hoof for many years.</td>
<td>Point out to students that the author has started this description of the stables in an unusual way. The author could have simply said that ‘the piglet lived in the stables.’ However, he chose to describe the stables and evoke a pleasant atmosphere. He first introduces the stables in a general way before getting down to a more specific description of it. Then, rather than just saying that ‘horses hadn’t lived in the stables for a long time’, he provides this information by saying it had not rung to a horse’s hoof for many years. This is a quaint but evocative way of describing the floor of the old stables. It calls to mind the sounds of metal-shod hooves landing on the floor that could be heard there many years ago. It lets readers imagine what the horses might have been doing and how they looked and sounded. It makes the stables sound like they were busy and important many years ago but there are no horses there at the time of this story and so readers might expect it is now quiet and empty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but it was a useful place for storing things.</td>
<td>The word but signals to readers that something different is the case. Despite there being no horses, the stable is still a useful place. Everything needs to be useful on a farm and so the stable has another use from its original one. Now it is used for storing things. Next, the author provides three examples of how the stables were used. The overall image of the animals living in the shelter of the old stables provides a comfortable and safe haven for the piglet who is to be the main character in the story. The reader can also infer that the whole farm will be comfortable and safe, and that the farmer and his wife will care for all the animals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Examples of how the stables were useful**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>The hens foraged about there,</strong></td>
<td>The words chosen give readers good feelings as well as allowing them to imagine the stable visually. The hens in this barn <em>forage</em>. This gives an image of busy hens going from place to place around the floor of the barn searching for food. They have to search for it and in this stable there must be plenty of places to look.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and sometimes laid their eggs</td>
<td>As well, while the hens were in the barn, they <em>sometimes laid their eggs</em>. There must have been other places they laid their eggs but in the stable was one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the old wooden mangers;</td>
<td>The place the hens chose to lay their eggs was <em>in the old wooden mangers</em>. The old wooden mangers would have originally been the place the farmer put hay for horses to eat. Perhaps there was still some hay there to make comfortable, safe places to lay eggs. The image of busy hens and old mangers with eggs laid in them is a comfortable and safe image. Nothing disturbs the hens or interrupts the rhythm of their lives. They are happy and well-fed and safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>the swallows built their nests against its roof beams with mud from the duckpond;</strong></td>
<td>Swallows are not farm animals but small, graceful migratory birds. They have to choose safe places to build their nests near water where they can obtain mud. This image lifts readers’ imaginations from the stable floor to the roof beams. With the duck pond close by, the swallows also have everything they need to lead happy lives. The fact that the ducks have a pond means they are looked after properly too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>and rats and mice lived happy lives in its shelter</strong></td>
<td>Rats and mice are not usually welcome inhabitants of farms but in this stable on this farm they <em>lived happy lives in its shelter</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until the farm cats cut them short.</td>
<td>Even this image has a rightness about it. Although the rats and mice had short lives they were not poisoned or trapped by the farmer but caught by the farm cats going about their business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At one end of the stables were two loose-boxes with boarded sides topped by iron rails. Having described the stables by listing its uses, the author narrows the description to the section that is going to be most significant in the story. He locates the loose-boxes and gives a physical description of them. Now that the author has provided an overview of the stables, he moves readers’ attention to one end of the stables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses of this part of the stables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. One served as a kennel for Fly and her puppies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The other sometimes housed sick sheep.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, the author describes why the loose-boxes were an important part of the old stable. He gives two reasons. This sentence actually means that the dogs lived in one of the loose boxes. The way it is actually worded, however, makes one (of the loose-boxes) the topic of the sentence. That word choice then makes it sound as though a loose-box does something (served). This use of the word served keeps the emphasis on an element of the stable and its use. It also continues the idea of animals being cared for, even by the stable. The stables have been personified.

This sentence also could have been written differently as, ‘Sick sheep sometimes lived in the other loose-box.’ Again, by choosing to place the other (loose box) as the topic of the sentence, the focus is kept on the role of the stable in the story. In both sentences, the words served and housed provide an image of a safe place for all kinds of animals. By association, the farmer is competent and kind but not fussy.

Location of Babe

Here Farmer Hogget had shut the piglet. The paragraph ends with a statement that locates the piglet in a context where he is near Fly and the sheep. Having established that the stable is a comfortable place for animals, the author locates the piglet there. Again, the word here is first in the sentence. This refers to the second loose-box which had occupants occasionally when required. This choice keeps the stables as the focal point of this paragraph.
What you could say

**Preformulation**

T: Let’s have a look at this passage very carefully because the author has been able to make us feel like we know what the stables look like and smell like and sound like and what they are used for now. We get a feeling that they are a very comfortable place for animals. He has written so that we have a positive attitude to the farm and the farmer and his wife. The author wants us to like them. Instead of just saying ‘the piglet was put in the old stables’, the author has chosen to describe the stables in a very positive way first.

**Question:** What is the first part of the stables, which the author describes in this passage?

S: The floor.

**Reconceptualisation**

T: Yes, the floor of the stables. He is writing about this building from the floor up, so we gradually get a clear image of it.

**Preformulation**

T: The author actually then tells us horses hadn’t lived in the stables for a long time. This gives us a picture of what the stables used to be like and what they are like now, all in the one sentence.

**Question:** So how does the author tell us that horses don’t walk on the stable floor?

S: Had not rung.

**Reconceptualisation**

T: Yes. It (the floor of the stables) had not rung to a horse’s hoof. So we know that, in the old days, hooves would have been making busy ringing sounds as the horses walked in and out of the stables. Remember, horses wear metal shoes, which would ring when they clop onto stone or brick. This hasn’t happened to this floor for quite a while.

**Question:** How long since hooves have stopped making a ringing sound on this floor?

S: For a long time.

**Reconceptualisation**

T: Yes, the author tells us for many years. These days, farmers have tractors and motorbikes for their farm work.

**Preformulation**

T: So readers might expect the stables to be quiet deserted places now that there are no horses.

**Question:** But what are the stables useful for now?

S: Storing things.

**Reconceptualisation**

T: That’s it, for storing things. And a place to put things is very useful indeed.

Complete the teaching sequence, transformations, spelling and writing on passage one before beginning work on passage two.
### High order literate orientation – Passage two

#### Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording.</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of reasons why characters behave in a certain way.</td>
<td>The author starts four sentences with the word <em>Because</em> so that the reader has no doubt about what the reasons are for the change in status for Babe. The reasons are so important, they are put first in the sentences. The writer has written as if in answer to the question ‘why’? That's why the answer comes first in the sentence. This is an unusual but effective way of emphasising the reasons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. *Because* Babe had now saved the flock, not only from rustlers but also from the worries, the Hoggets could not do too much for him. | So *why* could the Hoggets not do too much for Babe? *Because* he had saved the flock of sheep not once, but twice! First he saved them from the sheep rustlers who were trying to steal them. Next he saved them from the feral dogs. (Poor old Ma died as a consequence.) Remember the farmer first thought that Babe had been chasing the sheep. But when he finds out it was dogs, and in fact Babe had had a go at them, he realises that Babe is a very valuable asset to the farm. So because of this the Hoggets would do anything for him if they thought he wanted it. Later we find that Mrs Hogget even starts to let him into the house. |

2. Because he was a pig (though Farmer Hogget increasingly felt himself thinking of Pig as Dog and fed him accordingly), they gave him unlimited supplies of what they supposed he could not have too much of – namely, food. | So *why* did the Hoggets feed Babe unlimited supplies of food? *Because* he was a pig. And pigs usually like to eat a lot. It’s part of their nature. And the Hoggets supposed Babe was like any other pig in this respect. However, the farmer also often felt like Babe was a dog, because he acted so much like one, so he found himself actually feeding him dog food. |

3. Because he was strong-minded and revelled in his newfound speed, he ate sparingly of it. | So *why* did Babe only eat sparingly (not much) of all this food the Hoggets were giving him? *Because* he was strong minded and loved being a fast sheep-pig. An ordinary pig would have eaten everything but Babe was no ordinary pig and he was able to eat small amounts of food. |
4. Because there was always a lot left over, Fly became fat and the chickens chubby and the ducks dumpy, and the very rats and mice rolled happily about the stables with stomachs full to bursting. And finally, why did Fly, the chickens, the ducks and even the rats and mice become fat and chubby and dumpy and have stomachs full to bursting? Because there was always a lot of Babe’s food left over in his bowl. These other animals helped themselves to Babe’s leftovers, as well as eating their own food, so they got fatter. When farm animals are fat they are happy. It means they are not stressed out doing lots of work and that they have plenty to eat. So we have a situation where everyone is happy on the farm, thanks to Babe! The farmer and his wife are happy that their sheep are safe. Babe is happy because he loves being a sheep-pig, especially now he is a fast runner. And the other animals are happy because they have plenty to eat. Fly, especially, is happy because she is getting older and doesn’t mind retiring from the job of being the sheep-dog of the farm.

Expansion

Mrs Hogget even took to calling Babe to the back door, to feed him some titbit or other that she thought he might particularly fancy; and from here it was but a short step to inviting him into the house, which one day she did. Now the author tells us that Mrs Hogget is even calling to Babe (as if he were a dog) and feeding him little fancy bits of food at the back door. Now she is being a bit motherly just like Fly, Babe just brings out the best in all the characters in the story. And Mrs Hogget is so impressed with his intelligence and good manners that it’s not long before she invites him into the house one day. Fly said right at the beginning of the story that the house would always be out-of bounds for a pig. But Babe has made it and comes inside and watches TV with Mrs Hogget!
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.

Transformations – Passage one

Goals of the transformations

Students will understand, discuss and then be able to use the writer’s techniques exemplified in this passage. To do this they will need:

- to understand why the author starts with a general description of the stables and then narrows his focus to the loose boxes
- to understand how the author creates a pleasant atmosphere
- to understand the author’s use of expansions
- to understand how this detailed description of the stables influences the readers’ opinion of the farm and the farmer
- to engage in joint reconstructed writing exercises where the students take on the role of the author for part/s of this text.

Teaching focus

Authors often start descriptions off with a general statement and then narrow the focus. This is so the reader can have a clear visual image of what’s being described. It’s a bit like a movie camera zooming in on a scene.

In this passage, King-Smith begins his description of the stables by describing the floor first, then the roof and then one end of the stables. He does this by telling about how the farmer uses the space, and also how the animals use it.

When authors make a statement, they often expand the image by giving examples. The author could have limited his description to the farm machinery or bags of feed stored there, but he brings in animals to convey how lively the stables still are. They might not have contented horses there, but there are other contented animals using the stables.
A general statement about the stables
In a quaint and unusual way, the author tells the reader first how the use of the stable has changed over time. It is an elegant way of evoking that beautiful, echoing clip clop sound on stone or brick. In the one sentence the author allows the reader to have an image of the sounds of the past contrasting with the sounds of the present.

The reader knows that stables are purpose built for horses, so might expect the stables to have become useless. The word but tells us that, contrary to reader expectations, they are still useful for storing things.

Examples of how the stables were useful
First he tells us about the hens. They forage on the floor, probably amongst old straw and oats. Hens choose warm safe places to lay their eggs, so this further conveys a pleasant image for the stables.

Next he writes about the swallows and the roof, and the reader now can expand the image of the floor to the roof with graceful birds flitting between the roof and the duck pond.

Even though rats and mice are hardly welcome, they are happy in the stables and their existence allows the cats to do their job efficiently. The author uses the word shelter to evoke a place or refuge that protects against danger and the elements. The rats and mice have short lives but this is a fact of life. Farm animals often have short lives. Avoiding this fate for Babe is what the story is all about.

Physical description of one special part of the stables
After a general and evocative description, the author turns to the part of the stables that will be important for Babe.

Now the author writes so the reader can picture two loose-boxes up one end, where horses used to be shut in. We know that these will be used for some other purpose now, because nothing is wasted on a farm and the stables are useful.

Uses of this part of the stables
Authors can choose to describe things in different ways. The author could have said ‘one loose-box was used as a kennel’ etc but instead King-Smith chose to write about the stables as if they wanted to be of use. This is personification. Using the word served gives the feeling that the stables were happy to be of service to the dogs or the farmer.
Similarly, instead of writing ‘the other was used for sick sheep’, Dick King-Smith wrote as if the stables were kindly providing housing for sick sheep. This way of writing continues the theme of the stables being a very pleasant place, and so we can assume the rest of the farm, and by extension the farmer and his wife, were probably pleasant too.

**Location of Babe**
Finally, the author tells us what the farmer does with the pig. After the description of the stables, however, we are in no doubt that the pig, even though he was shut in, was in a safe and pleasant place, surrounded by contented animals and cared for by a good farmer.

What you could say

**Preformulation**
T: Authors often choose to start descriptions off with a general statement and then narrow the focus. This is so the reader can have a clear visual image of what’s being described. It’s a bit like a movie camera zooming in on a scene.

Question: So what part of the stables does King-Smith want us to visualise first?
S: The floor.

**Reconceptualisation**
T: That’s right. He wants us to picture what used to happen on this floor and then tell us what happens now. Can someone come out and cut out the first part of the stables we are getting a picture of in our heads?

**Preformulation**
T: So the author writes in an old fashioned way about horses’ metal hooves making a ringing sound on this floor. But that actually hadn’t happened for quite a while.

Question: How long since horse’s hooves had made a ringing sound on this floor?
S: Many years.

**Reconceptualisation**
T: Yes. Can someone cut out for us the bit that says *for many years*? So now we know that the stables are not used for their original purpose.

Question: But are they quiet and empty now?
S: No.

**Reconceptualisation**
T: Correct. The word *but* tells us that it would be wrong to think that the stables are not useful any more, just because the horses are gone.

Question: What are they being used for now?
S: For storing things.

**Reconceptualisation**
T: Yes, for storing things. Next the author expands on the stables’ usefulness by describing what some of the animals do there. While he does this he also makes us feel like they must be a cosy place for animals.
Transformations – Passage two
Goals of the transformations

Students will understand, discuss and then be able to use the writer’s techniques exemplified in this passage. To do this, they will need:

- to understand why the author lists reasons for, and then the consequences of, Babe’s change in status
- to understand the author’s technique of starting four sentences with the word because
- to engage in joint reconstructed writing exercises where the students take on the role of the author for parts of this text.

Teaching focus

Authors will sometimes start chapters in unusual ways. This adds interest and variety for the reader. Also, unusual sentence beginnings can add or change emphasis. This is why the author starts four sentences with because.

Language choice

Because / Babe / had now / saved / the flock / / not only / from rustlers / but also / from the worriers / / the Hoggets / could not / do too much / for him / . /

The author makes clear that the Hoggets realise that Babe has saved the flock not just once but twice. This has made them very grateful.

Because / he was / a pig / / though / Farmer Hogget / increasingly / found himself thinking / of Pig / as Dog / and / fed him / accordingly / / / / / / / / / / they / gave / him / unlimited supplies / of / what they supposed / he could not have too much of / – / namely / / food / . /

Because / he / was / strong-minded / and / revelled / in his newfound speed / / / he ate / sparingly / of it. /

Because / there was always / a lot left over / / Fly became fat / and / the chickens chubby / and / the ducks dumpy, / and / the very rats and mice / rolled happily / about the stables / with stomachs full to bursting / . /

Because / there was always / a lot left over / / Fly became fat / and / the chickens chubby / and / the ducks dumpy, / and / the very rats and mice / rolled happily / about the stables / with stomachs full to bursting / . /
Spelling animals were happy. The author has already included these animals in the story, as they are important members of this happy farm family. We continue to have a positive image of the farm. Note the use of alliteration when describing the fatter animals.

Expansion:
Now the author provides the ultimate expansion on the way the Hoggets are looking after Babe. Not only are they giving him unlimited supplies of food, they are also giving him little tasty treats from the back door. They are probably little scraps from Mrs Hogget’s cooking. And if he is being fed human food at the back door, it’s only natural for Mrs Hogget, as her affection and admiration for him increase, to eventually invite him inside.

Mrs Hogget / even took to calling / Babe / to the back door, / to feed / him / some / titbit or other / that / she thought / he might / particularly fancy / ; / and / from here / it was / but a short step / to inviting him / into the house / , / which / one day / she did / . /

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

These are some suggestions for spelling and teachers will probably make other choices based on their spelling goals and the specific needs of the class.

#### Examples from passage one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-oo-</th>
<th>-ai-</th>
<th>-ou-</th>
<th>-gg-</th>
<th>-sh-</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fl/oor</td>
<td>r/ai/ls</td>
<td>h/ouse/d</td>
<td>e/dds</td>
<td>sh/elt/er</td>
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<td>l/oose/-b/ox/es</td>
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</table>

**Compound Words**
- roof/-beams
- loose/-boxes
- some/times
- duck/pond

#### Examples from passage two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-au-</th>
<th>-ck-</th>
<th>-ch-</th>
<th>-ee-</th>
<th>-ou-</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be/c/ause</td>
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<td>st/om/ach/s</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Compound Words**
- new/found

### 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](http://www.etymonline.com) and [http://www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)

#### Examples

*Pig:* this is probably from Old English (origin unknown) and originally meant young pig (an adult pig was a ‘swine’). Another word for pig in those days was *fearth*, which meant to furrow (that is: pigs dig). Later it came to mean the adult and *let* was added to show *piglet* means a young pig.
*Flock* was originally spelled *flocc* in Old English and meant ‘a group of persons’. Around 1200, it came to mean ‘a number of animals of one kind moving or feeding together’, and 100 years later referred to domestic animals like sheep. The spelling would have been changed when it was decided to standardise and use *ck* at the end of words instead of *cc*.

**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.

**Examples**

Reconstruct sentences, paragraphs and sections of text as appropriate. For example, reconstruct the part where the author begins the description of the stables with the floor and then describes what the animals do in there. In another lesson/s, reconstruct the part where the author describes the loose boxes as if they are providing shelter.

Jointly reconstructing these and other sections will greatly assist with the discussions about the writing and the writing workshops. Although there is no need to reconstruct whole passages, passages one and two are quite short and could be reconstructed over a couple of days. The students’ responses during joint reconstructed writing will give the teacher an indication of how much of the literate discourse or educational ground rules they understand and control.

**What you could say**

Now we are going to write like King-Smith because then we can try to practise thinking like an author. We know quite well by now what he wrote and how it makes us feel, so we can try to guess what he was actually thinking and planning when he wrote. Then we can think and plan before doing our own writing. Doing it this way has helped us already with our writing, hasn’t it? So I’m going to think out loud like this author might have:
‘So I want to describe these stables as a nice, safe, secure place, because then my readers will know that Babe is welcome and that the farmer is a caring person. I want to build an image of the floor first and then describe the roof, and I want to talk about the happy animals that live in there, although there are no horses anymore. So I will start the first sentence with The floor. Now I need a capital letter because it’s the beginning of a sentence. I can write The automatically, because I write it so often. It’s Th and then an e. Now floor starts with the fl and then it has the pattern oor. That’s fl-oor.’

Everyone got that? Write it with me. Ok? Now the floor is a part of what? The stables, that’s right. First, we write of. Then the. We know the. Let’s write that. Now stables starts with st and then able and we also add an s because the building has a lot of parts to it. That’s st-able-s. Of the stables. So we can start the description of the building with the floor: The floor of the stables…’

Continue like this, mixing a discussion of the meaning of the text with reasons for writing it like this and with modelling of how to spell the words.

**Writing**

Writing activities should not be based only on patterning, but 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 *Babe* would include:

- overall goals such as using the language techniques of Dick King-Smith to write a description of a place, creating a pleasant atmosphere (based on study passage one), or to write about the reasons for and the consequences of a changed situation (based on study passage two)
- short-term goals such as short exercises to practise writing a description of a place to create a specific atmosphere, or listing reasons why something or someone has changed.

While writing is an overall goal for the teaching sequence, it is during transformations that the discussions specifically relate to the language choices and writing techniques of the author. Therefore, you should refer back to the goals for transformations on passages one and two because, without discussions about these issues, students will be unable to complete either the joint or independent writing tasks with any principled understanding.
Workshop one

An idea for this writing workshop could be to describe a building whose use has changed over the years while conveying a pleasant atmosphere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Plan from Transformations – Passage one</th>
<th>Suggested joint writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General statement about the place.</td>
<td>The high tin roof of the train station had not echoed to the whistle of a train since the railway tracks had been pulled up, but it was still a busy place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– What it was used for in the past.</td>
<td>People in the village had family barbecues there every weekend. The school always had its end-of-year concert inside in the shade and they could make as much noise as they wanted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– What it’s like now.</td>
<td>At one end, where the ceiling was lower and there were big fans to cool the air, was a pre-school. Every day, the children’s colourful paintings could be seen drying on the platforms, and cheerful singing floated out on the breeze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Examples of what happens there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Description narrows to one part of the place.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workshop two

An idea for this writing workshop could be the reasons why someone’s status has changed over time and the consequences of this. Start each sentence with because.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Plan from Transformations</th>
<th>Suggested joint writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start sentences with because.</td>
<td>Reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three reasons and a consequence why someone’s status has changed.</td>
<td>1. Because Stuart had won not only the 200 metres but also the relay race, his friends thought he was the best runner in the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Because Stuart wanted to become an even better runner, the teachers encouraged him to train before and after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Because his friends wanted to run with him, all the kids became better runners and couldn’t stop smiling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Because all the kids were happier and healthier and came to school every day, the teachers were happy too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>The school even got invited to be in the opening ceremony of the Melbourne Commonwealth games because they showed such commitment to health and fitness.</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.
### Sample weekly plan

**Class:** Year 4  
**Week:** 1  
**Term:** 2

**Text:** *Babe* by Dick King-Smith

**Teaching focus:** The use of writing techniques to build atmosphere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Low Order Literate Orientation** | Introduce the type of story and the main characters.  
Overview of story, and then more detail orientation for chapters 1-2. Read. | Contrasting personalities of the characters.  
Revise and discuss. Provide orientation on next part of book. Read chapters 3-4. | Focus on the theme that hard work pays off.  
Encourage discussion of the book so far. Discuss characters and how the theme of the book might relate to them. Read chapters 5-6. | Babe's hard work and good manners: Babe's changed status.  
Continue and deepen discussions from last lesson. Provide overview of next 2 chapters. Read chapters 7-9. | Babe's personality and commitment. How have others helped? Will he win the trial?  

**High Order Literate Orientation**

- The floor of the stables had not rung to a horse’s hoof for many years, but it was a useful place for storing things.
  - Quaint way of providing general information about the stables.

- The hens foraged about there, and sometimes laid their eggs in the old wooden mangers.
  - First example of how stables were used.

- The swallows built their nests against its roof-beams with mud from the duck pond; and rats and mice lived happy lives in its shelter until the farm cats cut them short.
  - Discussed how author uses descriptive language to set the scene.

- At one end of the stables were two loose-boxes with boarded sides topped by iron rails.
  - The author uses this to create a sense of contrast.

**Transformations**

- The floor of the stables had not rung to a horse’s hoof for many years, but it was a useful place for storing things.
  - How does author create a pleasant atmosphere?

- The hens foraged about there, and sometimes laid their eggs in the old wooden mangers.
  - First example of how stables were used. Discuss how and why author evokes a pleasant image.

- The swallows built their nests against its roof-beams with mud from the duck pond; and rats and mice lived happy lives in its shelter until the farm cats cut them short.
  - How is the author conveying a strong image of the natural order of farm life? Discuss structure of passage.

- Revise and focus on why this passage is important for image of farm & farmer.  
Revise structure and discuss plan.

- At one end of the stables were two loose-boxes with boarded sides topped by iron rails.
  - Why has author narrowed focus of his description?  
What effect does this have?  
Revise structure and plan briefly with a view to devoting more time to the writing task.
### Sample weekly plan

#### Class: Year 4  
#### Text: *Babe* by Dick King-Smith

#### Term: 2  
**Teaching focus:** The use of writing techniques to build atmosphere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Spelling** | oo words  
fl/oor  
h/oof  
w/ood/en | Revise and teach oo compound words:  
r/oo/lf  
r/oo/mb/eam/s  
l/oo/soe/-/b/ox/es | Revise oo words, then teach ai words:  
r/ai/s  
l/ai  
ag/ainst | Jointly reconstruct the first sentence of Passage One. Focus discussion on structure. | Revision and compound words:  
r/oo/lf/-/b/eam/s  
l/oo/soe/-/b/ox/es  
s/ome/-/m/ee/s  
d/uck/pr/ond  
p/ig/et |
| **Writing** | | | | Start discussions of scenarios and writing plan based on Passage 1. | Class jointly write passage, using plan. Capable students may also write independent passage. |
**Text:**

*Babe* by Dick King-Smith

**Teaching focus:**
The use of writing techniques to build atmosphere.

**Strategy**

- **Monday**
  - **Spelling**
    - oo words: *fl/oor, h/oof, w/ood/en*
    - Revise and teach oo compound words: *r/oof/-/b/eam/s, l/oose/-/b/ox/es*

- **Tuesday**
  - Revise oo words, then teach ai words: *r/ail/s, l/aid, ag/ainst*

- **Wednesday**
  - Jointly reconstruct the first sentence of Passage One. Focus discussion on structure.

- **Thursday**
  - Revision and compound words: *r/oof/-/b/eam/s, l/oose/-/b/ox/es, s/ome/t/ime/s, d/uck/p/ond, p/ig/l/et*

- **Friday**
  - Writing
    - Start discussions of scenarios and writing plan based on Passage 1.
    - Class jointly write passage, using plan. Capable students may also write independent passage.
The floor of the stables had not rung to a horse’s hoof for many years, but it was a useful place for storing things. The hens foraged about there, and sometimes laid their eggs in the old wooden mangers; the swallows built their nests against its roof-beams with mud from the duckpond; and rats and mice lived happy lives in its shelter until the farm cats cut them short.

At one end of the stables were two loose-boxes with boarded sides topped by iron rails.

One served as a kennel for Fly and her puppies.

The other sometimes housed sick sheep.

Here Farmer Hogget had shut the piglet.
Because Babe had now saved the flock not only from rustlers but also from the worriers,

the Hoggets could not do too much for him.

Because he was a pig (though Farmer Hogget increasingly felt himself thinking of Pig as Dog and fed him accordingly),

they gave him unlimited supplies of what they supposed he could not have too much of – namely, food.

Because he was strong-minded

and revelled in his newfound speed,

he ate sparingly of it.

Because there was always a lot left over,

Fly became fat

and the chickens chubby

and the ducks dumpy,

and the very rats and mice rolled happily about the stables with stomachs full to bursting.
Mrs Hogget even took to calling Babe to the back door,
to feed him some titbit or other
that she thought he might particularly fancy;
and from here it was but a short step to inviting him into the house,
which one day she did.
One beautiful morning, when the sky was clear and cloudless, and the air so crisp and fresh that you could almost taste it, Babe woke feeling on top of the world. Like a trained athlete, he felt so charged with energy that he simply couldn’t keep still. He bounced about the stable floor on all four feet, shaking his head about and uttering a series of short sharp squeaks.

‘You’re full of it this morning,’ said Fly with a yawn. ‘You’d better run to the top of the hill and back to work it off.’

‘OK Mum!’ said Babe, and off he shot while Fly settled comfortably back in the straw.

Dashing across the home paddock, Babe bounded up the hill and looked about for the sheep. Though he knew he would see them later on, he felt so pleased with life that he thought he would like to share that feeling with Ma and all the others, before he ran home again; just to say ‘Hello! Good morning, everybody! Isn’t it a lovely day!’ They were, he knew, in the most distant of all the fields on the farm, right away up at the top of the lane.
He looked across, expecting that they would be grazing quietly or lying comfortably and cudding in the morning sun, only to see them galloping madly in every direction. On the breeze came cries of ‘Wolf!’ but not the usual bored, almost automatic, tones of complaint that they used when Fly worked them. These were yells of real terror, desperate calls for help. As he watched, two other animals came in sight, one large, one small, and he heard the sound of barking and yapping as they dashed about after the fleeing sheep. ‘You’ll get some wolves as’ll chase sheep and kill ‘em’ – Ma’s exact words came back to Babe, and without a second thought he set off as fast as he could go in the direction of the noise.

What a sight greeted him when he arrived in the far field! The flock, usually so tightly bunched, was scattered everywhere, eyes bulging, mouths open, heads hanging in their evident distress, and it was clear that the dogs had been at their worrying for some time. A few sheep had tried in their terror to jump the wire fencing and had become caught up in it, some had fallen into the ditches and got stuck. Some were limping as they ran about, and on the grass were lumps of wool torn from others.
Most dreadful of all, in the middle of the field, the worriers had brought down a ewe, which lay on its side feebly kicking at them as they growled and tugged at it.

On the day when the rustlers had come, Babe had felt a mixture of fear and anger. Now he knew nothing but a blind rage, and he charged flat out at the two dogs, grunting and snorting with fury. Nearest to him was the smaller dog, a kind of mongrel terrier, which was snapping at one of the ewe’s hindlegs, deaf to everything in the excitement of the worry.

Before it could move, Babe took it across the back and flung it to one side, and the force of his rush carried him on into the bigger dog and knocked it flying.

This one, a large black crossbred, part collie, part retriever, was made of sterner stuff than the terrier, which was already running dazedly away; and it picked itself up and came snarling back at the pig. Perhaps, in the confusion of the moment, it thought that this was just another sheep that had somehow found courage to attack it; but if so, it soon knew better, for as it came on, Babe chopped at it with his terrible pig’s bite, the bite that grips and tears, and now it was not sheep’s blood that was spilled.
Howling in pain, the black dog turned and ran, his tail between his legs. He ran, in fact, for his life, an open-mouthed bristling pig hard on his heels.

The field was clear, and Babe suddenly came back to his senses.
These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 4. 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.