Lower Primary

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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

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- 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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Lower Primary
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Using this resource
Year level

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 3. However, they could also be used with older students who have difficulties with reading.

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The text

The Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race
Synopsis of the story

This story or fable is a very funny account of a swimming race held in a river in Africa. The contestants are hippopotamuses who live like humans, wearing clothes, driving cars and going to school. Our hero, Edward, is eight years old, and is training very hard for this race. The complication occurs when a cheat called Sebastian arrives and almost prevents Edward from completing the race. Barney, Edward’s friend, saves the day and Edward becomes a champion. The story is accompanied by many illustrations, which add meaning and richness to the text.

This book was selected by Victorian school students as their favourite young children’s story by an Australian author.

Theme

This story, like a modern fable, illustrates that hard work pays off, that good friends can help each other and that cheats don’t always win. It emphasises the qualities of commitment, confidence and cooperation.

Why use this story?

This story is a chapter book for younger students. The complication is straightforward and easily resolved, and the overall message is positive and heartening. Aspects of the story with which students might identify include:

- being eight years old
- having a proud and supportive family
- the excitement of trying hard and the anticipation of a big event
- dealing with new experiences
- coping with unpleasant people
- the rewards of friendship
- the delight of success.

Morris Lurie uses techniques that should enhance students’ own writing. In the first study passage, he vividly describes events and makes clear the motivation of the main character. In the second study passage he describes another character’s personality and motivations. Dialogue is used in both passages to reveal the characters’ personalities and relationships.
Structure of the text

The story is a simple narrative with an orientation, complication and resolution structure. It is narrated in the third person and the thoughts, actions and motivations of the characters are revealed. The narrator is sympathetic to the main character.

The following summary could be used to attune students to the way the author develops the text’s narrative structure. Even good readers are not always aware of the ways in which authors introduce characters and help readers to build mental images of settings and events in the orientation of a narrative. Likewise, they may not be aware of how the complication and resolution are related to the orientation.

Orientation: Chapters 1–5

In the first five chapters the reader learns about eight-year-old Edward and his extended family, which is so very proud of him. Edward is particularly good at swimming and so his grandfather suggests he enters the Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race, to be held on the Zamboola River. It is a long, hard swim, so Edward must embark on a strict training and nutrition regime. Meanwhile his grandfather enters him in the race, his grandmother knits him some bathing trunks, and his father buys a bus so they can all attend the race. When Edward feels discouraged about the tough life of an athlete, his family and friends are so supportive that he cheers up.

The day of the race arrives. Edward is astounded at all the new sights and sounds he experiences. It seems every animal in Africa is there to watch, and this year there is a record number of entrants. Edward finds preparations for the race confusing, as it’s all very new, but he copes because he has the support of his loving family.

Complication: Chapters 6–8

During the unsettling time when Edward must queue for his number and special singlet for the race, he meets two other entrants. Barney is friendly and just as nervous as Edward, and they both feel better for having found a friend. Sebastian, however, is big, bad tempered and boasts all the time. Chapter 6 is titled ‘Sebastian’, indicating what an important character he will be. Edward bumps into the rude Sebastian, and so draws attention to himself. He also loses confidence about his chances in the race after seeing how big Sebastian is.
Before the start of the race readers learn about all the rules that have come about through various hippos cheating over the years, and begin to realise that the complication will probably involve an incident of cheating rather than a hippo who can swim faster than Edward. The mighty Sebastian is positioned next to Edward in the race, so we can anticipate trouble. Even while standing in the line-up Sebastian manages to be rude and continues to boast. He is going to be a huge problem. In Chapter 8 we read what happens in the race. Some hippos give up, some are disqualified, and even Edward, with all his training behind him, finds it gruelling. Then Sebastian grabs hold of Edward’s leg and Edward starts to slow down. He almost loses hope, especially when he realises that the judges can’t see what is happening under the water.

Resolution: Chapters 9–10
Edward’s new friend Barney solves the problem by cleverly pulling off Sebastian’s swimming trunks. This so disorients and shames Sebastian that he pulls out of the race, then waits in the shallows until everyone goes home before leaving the river. Although tired and upset by what has happened, Edward does not want to disappoint his friends. This thought motivates him; he uses the speed and stamina he has developed to make up for lost time, and flies over the finishing line. Edward wins the race and Barney comes second. Being a humble and modest hippo, Edward realises he couldn’t have won without Barney’s help, as well as his hard training program. Although Edward is a champion, he just wants to be with his family and friends.

Language features of the text
Passage one
Passage one (pages 14–16) has been chosen because it shows how an author can expand on a recount of events to build up vivid images for the reader. This technique also allows the reader to infer a character’s motivations.

This passage is important to the structure of the text because it makes Edward’s later success credible. It also promotes the theme that hard work can bring rewards.
Morris Lurie achieves this by:

- starting the chapter with a description of when the events take place
- contrasting what ordinary hippos do with what Edward does
- using image-building verbs (e.g., leapt)
- starting clauses with processes that expand on the action (e.g., wasting, looking, sucking)
- using onomatopoeic words (e.g., Splash and Whoosh)
- listing sets of action to emphasise the vigorousness of Edward’s exercises (e.g., windmills, press-up, deep knee bends and two-legged leaps)
- using dialogue to show characters’ motivations and relationships.

Passage two

Passage two (pages 52–55) has been chosen because it shows how an author can introduce and describe a major character so that the reader has a vivid image of his or her appearance and personality. In this case, the description influences the reader to dislike the character, Sebastian. The author also shows the effect of this character on others through the use of dialogue.

Morris Lurie achieves this by:

- using large nominal groups
- using verbs that tell how as well as what happened (e.g., fixed, whispered, announced)
- providing expanded descriptions of Sebastian and his car and clothes
- using dialogue to reveal a character's attitudes.
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 Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race* aims to teach:

- how to read the study passages fluently, and with a high level of inferential comprehension
- how to discuss the story, including its structure, theme and ideology and give opinions about the author’s language choices
- how to write, with appropriate teacher assistance, short passages that either recount events using image-building language or describe a character in a way that influences readers to either dislike or like the character.

**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 – Whole book**

The first aim of low order literate orientation is 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 it contains.

Note that it may take several sessions to read the whole book to the class, so you might start work on passage one before you have finished it. Make sure you have read at least the first three chapters, however, before returning to the first study passage to start looking at the author’s language choices in closer detail.

Low order literate orientation on, and reading of, the whole book should precede any work on passage two.
Teaching focus

- Discuss the type of story this is. Discuss the moral of the story.
- Refer to other fables the class has read, or read some fables during this teaching sequence.
- Explain why studying this story will benefit the students.
- Provide a brief overview of the story.

What you could say

**Preformulation**
Now I want you to look at this picture. Look at this character here. He’s looking a bit embarrassed about all the attention he is getting from his family. It’s a very special occasion, his eighth birthday. His name is Edward Day.

**Question:** What are his family doing, can you see?

**Reconceptualisation**
Yes, they are taking a photo so they remember this important day. Edward’s family dote on him. Here are his parents at the back. Grandad is taking the photo, while Grandma looks on. They have measured and weighed Edward.

**Question:** Do your parents measure you every so often to keep track of how you are growing?

**Reconceptualisation**
The family in this story do because the hippos are given human characteristics. That’s important to know. The other important thing to know is that Edward’s family think he is fantastic.

**Preformulation**
So, when Edward has a swim on his birthday, his family comment on what a good swimmer he is.

**Question:** And what do you think they do then?

**Reconceptualisation**
That’s right, they enter him in the Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race. The book is about Edward’s training and the race itself. Edward is a very likeable chap. When amazing things happen, he usually just says, ‘Gosh!’
Preformulation
I think Edward is probably saying ‘Gosh!’ in this picture when his grandad has the idea that he could win the race.

Question: Do you think Edward will win this race?

Reconceptualisation
We’ll have to see. There’s going to be a problem, I’m sure, because stories always have problems.

Teaching focus
- We are introduced to Edward on his eighth birthday. His family is doing the normal things families do when a treasured child has a birthday. It’s not until the second sentence that we realise that Edward is a hippopotamus. We find out that the Day family, as happens in fables, act like humans and animals. So they go to school and have cameras, but they also swim like hippos in the river.
- Edward is a good swimmer, and in this chapter it is decided that he will start to train for the famous Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race, to be held in the treacherous Zamboola River.
- We begin to work out the personalities of the characters in the story. Edward’s parents and grandparents dote on him and Edward himself is sweet, unassuming and nervous.
- Edward’s grandfather had entered the Annual African Hippopotamus Race the fourth time it was held. He came third. He undertakes to train Edward.

Illustrations
- The illustrations in this chapter introduce us to the concept of hippos doing human things such as taking photographs, standing on two legs and smiling, wearing clothes and poring over maps (not everyone in the family, however, knows how to read a map).
- Edward has a bemused and/or astonished expression on his face in most of the illustrations.

Read Chapter 1 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
- We believe that the Day family will act like any ordinary human family, as well as have hippopotamus traits.
- The family is so proud of Edward, being the only child, that they think he is a great swimmer. The author tells us later in this chapter that he really is a great swimmer. It’s the thing he is very good at.
- Edward has great respect for his grandfather, and so is happy to train with him for the race.
Teaching focus

- Edward’s training routine is described in detail. He is very committed and works hard to get into shape for the race. His grandfather, who is in charge of the training, feels worn out!
- Edward’s grandfather writes a letter to enter Edward in the race, and his grandmother knits him some swimming trunks.
- The only negative aspect of so much training is that Edward misses his school friends, but when they come to training one day to cheer him on, he feels better.
- A letter arrives accepting Edward as a contestant. This chapter ends with only six days to go until the event.

Illustrations

- Pages 15, 17: The pictures of Edward and his grandfather training show that they are working very hard.
- Pages 19, 21: We see Edward’s grandfather composing the letter and he and Edward’s father reading a newspaper article about the race.
- Page 23: Edward’s friends encourage him and help provide the motivation he needs to continue his difficult training regime. One hippo is wearing a Bruce Lee T-shirt.

*Read Chapter 2 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.*

Inferences

- Edward has agreed to train and enter the race, so he puts everything into it. It’s a tough regime, but he doesn’t complain. It’s also tough on Edward’s grandfather, who falls asleep a lot during the training.
- Edward’s grandfather’s letter is very literate, indicating that he is a well-educated hippo.
- Edward is an innocent and trusting child who wants to please his elders, but he misses playing with his friends. When his friends come to visit, however, they are so encouraging that he is spurred on to swim even faster than usual.

Teaching focus

- Edward trains twice as hard while the family prepares for the long trip to the Zamboola River.
- Edward’s father has bought a London bus. He paints it yellow and fits it out so that it can accommodate five hippopotamuses.
- The family is so proud of Edward that they hoist a flag with his name on it on top of the bus.
With one day remaining until they leave, all training stops so that Edward doesn’t overtrain and can relax before the big event.

Edward is able to have a great day playing with his friends.

Illustrations

• Pages 26–27: The interior of the bus looks palatial with its chandelier, cosy comforter, padded seats and nice wallpaper. Edward’s father is inside putting the finishing touches to the bed, while his mother and a friend are peering in through the windows. Even the driver’s seat is padded.

• Pages 28–29: Have a look at the house. It is rather like an African thatched hut, and is probably perfect for the climate. Here are all the family: Mum finishing off the trunks, Dad hoisting the flag, and Grandfather consulting the calendar and deciding that training should now stop.

• Page 31: Edward and his friends are tired after spending the afternoon playing.

Read Chapter 3 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

• With such a hectic training regime, it’s no wonder the last six days fly by. Edward hardly has time to be nervous about the impending race.

• The fact that Edward’s father bought a London bus in London shows that this is a very special story, with African animals acting like well-travelled humans.

• Edward’s father refurbishes the bus so that it ends up being very comfortable.

• This family is so proud of Edward that they put a flag on the top of the bus with his name on it.

• Edward’s grandfather knows how to train the young hippo. To ensure that Edward will arrive at the race relaxed and not tired, he has given him the afternoon off to play with his friends.

Teaching focus

• While they travel to the Zamboola River, Edward sleeps comfortably all night in the bed his father installed in the bus. It seems that all the other hippos are on their way to the river as well.

• They make camp on a hill with a view and cook pancakes for breakfast.

• An amazing sight greets Edward when he wakes up. Out the window he sees millions of animals, flags, balloons, umbrellas and streamers.

• Edward’s grandfather checks the temperature and current flow of the river.
Illustrations

- Pages 32–33: Look at the truck sign in front of the hippos – ‘Baby Elephant nappy wash’. That would be a big business, don’t you think? The roads are very crowded. Obviously, a large number of the population attend this event every year. However, it is the Day family’s first trip with Edward, so he doesn’t know what to expect.
- Pages 34–35: The illustration of the bus parked at the top of the hill and the river stretching out below looks rather like a map. Why do you think this might be?
- Page 37: You can see the astonishment and nervousness in Edward’s face as he looks out the bus window at the sight of all the animals celebrating with balloons, flags and streamers.
- Pages 38–39: This illustration shows a normal family cooking breakfast outdoors. There is a portable gas stove and the family members are standing or sitting on folding furniture under a shady tree. They are having fun. We can see Edward looking at the little jar with river water in it. He looks quizzical, but not too worried.

Read Chapter 4 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- We presume that the Day family has to drive at night because Edward’s father has a job.
- A bed has been installed in the bus so Edward will not be tired from the long overnight drive to the Zamboola River.
- It is interesting that they park the bus in a place where the family can see the whole stretch of river, just as if it were a map.
- Putting some water from the river into a jar might be the grandfather’s way of setting Edward’s mind at rest about the mighty Zamboola.

Teaching focus

- Edward seems to be well known, as many hippos greet him and wish him good luck. (There’s been an article and photograph in the paper about him.)
- Edward must go through the official processes of signing in and being weighed.
- He finds out there are 84 entrants this year, which is the most there have ever been.
Illustrations
- Page 41: We can see some of the many animals here, and they are all very excited.
- Pages 42–43: These are the wise and grizzled old hippos. They have chains around their necks, as mayors do. We can see newspaper photographers in the background. Edward is being introduced to the president. His grandfather has his arm around him so he won’t feel too nervous.
- Page 45: Some of these naked hippos are looking a bit self-conscious and nervous. Others look less worried and are even chatting to one another. Which one is Edward? On page 47, the same group is lined up, and the really nervous one looking behind him is probably Edward.

Read Chapter 5 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
- Food has a calming effect on Edward, so he is feeling better now than when he first looked out of the window of the bus at the amazing scene below him.
- This race is part of hippo tradition, so it is always held at the same time on the same day of the year. There is much pomp and ceremony as the revered old hippos sit on silver or gold chairs, according to their status.
- Edward feels awe at meeting the President (and winner of the first race). He has perfect manners.
- All the entrants have to strip off for weighing. Edward feels slightly awkward, but accepts this. Contrast this with Sebastian’s shame after his swimming trunks fall off. As for people, nakedness is contextual. Sebastian’s humiliation is public and unexpected, while the strip-off before the contest is part of pre-race procedure.
- Edward hadn’t thought about the other entrants, and he loses some confidence when he realises that all the others have trained just as hard as he has. His grandfather, however, never loses faith.

Teaching focus
- Edward has to get a number and a singlet. He meets up with Barney and they become friendly.
- We meet Sebastian, who is a big scary boaster. He is also rude and a bully.
- Edward and Barney separate after wishing each other good luck.
- Edward had the misfortune of bumping into Sebastian and attracting his notice. Sebastian takes the opportunity to boast some more and advises Edward not to bother about the race because he, Sebastian, is going to win.
- Edward rushes off to find his father and grandfather.

Illustrations
- Page 50: Edward and Barney are making friends. They are similar in age and personality, so it’s natural that they should do so.
- Page 53: Sebastian’s entrance. He is obviously driving where he shouldn’t, and it looks quite dangerous.
Pages 54–55: The focus is on Sebastian’s car, and his face. You see that he is someone you wouldn’t want as a friend. He has evil-looking eyes and big, glinting teeth.

Page 57: Edward is looking into the barrel of numbers. He doesn’t understand that you don’t wear them. He has a confused look on his face.

Pages 58–59: Edward is wondering about the small numbers. He then realises that he gets a singlet to wear. Now things start to make a bit more sense.

Page 60: Edward and Barney think they look quite stylish and admire each other.

Read Chapter 6 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Edward doesn’t know what to expect.
- Edward and Barney have an instant rapport. They both admit to being nervous and jittery, and decide just to swim their best.
- This stands in contrast to Sebastian’s attitude. He is not at all nervous, and even talks back to one of the officials. Most people agree that boasting is not very nice.
- The encounter with Sebastian leaves Edward unnerved. The reader can guess that Sebastian and Edward will meet again and that it won’t be pleasant.

Teaching focus

- After an afternoon nap, Edward reflects on all the amazing things that have happened that day. Then he remembers Sebastian.
- All Edward’s friends arrive to wish him luck. They are sure he is going to win. Edward isn’t so sure, especially after meeting Sebastian. Edward’s grandfather, however, has seen boasters before and is not worried about Sebastian.
- Edward is beginning to feel nervous despite all the well-wishers he meets on the way to the starting line. The starting line is like a bridge; it has been specially built for the race.
- As Edward takes his place on the starting line, the president runs through all the rules that have been devised in response to the cheating that has occurred in the past.
- Sebastian is late and causes a fuss. His starting position is next to Edward’s. He pokes Edward savagely in the chest.

This chapter finishes just before the starting pistol is fired.

Illustrations

- Page 62: Edward is relaxing in a pleasant, half-awake state after his nap; he idly runs through the events of the day. It’s not until he remembers Sebastian that he begins to feel nervous about the big event ahead of him.
- Page 65: Edward is not confident, although his grandfather is totally at ease. In his experience, a boastful hippo like Sebastian can’t swim nearly as well as he maintains.
• Pages 66–67: The whole family is shown going down to the river and being cheered by the crowds of animals.
• Pages 68–69: Grandfather is explaining the starting line, which is that wooden platform across the river. Notice the flags and the crowds. Everyone is excited.
• Pages 70–71: This is an aerial illustration; it is like a map. The crowds are lined up on either side of the river. We can see some of the entrants and estimate how huge this river must be if at least 84 hippos can line up across it. It’s going to be very crowded in that river when they all dive in. There is a hippo with a megaphone and there are more hippos in the motorboat.
• Pages 74–75: Sebastian is poking Edward in the chest.

Read Chapter 7 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

**Inferences**

• Edward has had many new experiences in the past 24 hours. He takes it all in his stride because he has the support of his family and friends. He is not desperate to win, but he is determined to do his best.
• Edward’s heart beats faster when he thinks of Sebastian, not only because he thinks he may win but also because Sebastian is a nasty character.
• Edward is quite nervous before the race.
• The long list of rules probably calms Edward. The race is very well organised, which is reassuring.
• Sebastian’s entrance and jabbing in the chest have probably upset Edward; nonetheless, he gamely waits for the starting pistol.

**Teaching focus**

• *BANG!* goes the pistol. All the spectators are drenched as the contestants dive into the river.
• After some initial confusion, the training and advice Edward has received from his grandfather take effect and he settles into a steady pace.
• We read about the race being called and then about some attempts to cheat, which are all foiled thanks to the vigilance of the officials. Some hippos withdraw, too exhausted to continue.
• Edward realises that he is among the leaders in the race.
• There are some cunning cheats, such as Horace and his twin brother, but the judges in the helicopter spot the trick and disqualify them.
• Edward gives himself a talking to and starts to move along faster.
• It is when there are only three hippos in front of him that he feels someone grabbing hold of his leg and pulling him back. Sebastian!

**Illustrations**

• Pages 76–77: There are waves, white water and lots of hippo bodies.
• Page 79: The vigilant judges are calling the race for the spectators (which include Edward’s family), as well as looking out for cheats.
Page 81: Edward is sucking up enormous breaths and swimming his heart out.
Page 83: Some of the crowd have banners and binoculars; they look very excited.
Page 84: This hippo is the one who swam into the 5-kilometre flag. The illustrator shows that he is dizzy through his crossed eyes and the swirling lines.
Pages 86–87: Horace’s twin brother is waiting in the shallows.
Page 88: Horace and his twin plan to swap places. They will be found out and disgraced.
Pages 90–91: From the expression in his eyes, it’s clear that Sebastian has evil in mind.

Read Chapter 8 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
- When that many large animals dive into the river, there will be a lot of displaced water. It’s lucky the Zamboola is a very big river.
- Edward would have been somewhat disoriented when he landed in the water with 83 other hippos swimming beside him. When Edward cannot hear what is going on, it’s his training that fortifies him and keeps him focused. He doesn’t make the same mistake others do by swimming too fast at the beginning. Although we laughed at how his grandfather was worn out by the training regime, he was actually a very good coach.
- When Horace’s plan is noticed by the judges and foiled, the reader hopes that whatever Sebastian has in mind will also be prevented.
- When Edward sees a huge, dark shape, he knows straightaway who it is. Sebastian has picked him as the hippo to beat, and the only way Sebastian knows how to win is to cheat.

Teaching focus
- Edward’s grandfather had not prepared him for Sebastian’s cheating, and Edward doesn’t know what to do. Even though he now feels he has lost the race, he keeps swimming and trying to get away from Sebastian, who wants to win at any cost.
- The judges can’t see what is going on.
- Although the judges can’t see, Edward’s friend Barney can. He grabs hold of Sebastian’s swimming trunks. They snap and sink to the bottom of the river. Sebastian is so upset he lets go of Edward, who now shoots ahead. With only a kilometre to go, Edward and Barney are neck and neck. Edward just wins after a massive effort.
- Meanwhile Sebastian is too embarrassed to get out of the river and must wait until everyone goes home before he can leave.
Illustrations
- Page 93: Somehow, even though this judge is paying close attention, he misses what Sebastian is doing under the water. Sebastian’s colour blends into the dark water.
- Pages 94–95: Barney can see what is going on. He is determined to stop Sebastian. He looks really angry and, although he is much smaller, he manages to pull off Sebastian’s trunks.
- Page 97: Edward’s fans are going wild because they can see that Edward is about to win.
- Pages 98–99: Edward is giving a last mighty kick, which sends him across the line first. His training and attitude have paid off.

Read Chapter 9 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
- Being humble and not in the least sneaky, Edward now feels he has no hope of winning the race and almost gives up. The reader hopes the judges will see what is occurring, but the casual announcement about the leaders of the race tells us that they haven’t.
- Barney, however, is cleverer than we might have first thought. He understands what is going on and is brave enough and angry enough to try to stop Sebastian. He knows what to do.
- This is another instance when the hippos act like people. The naked Sebastian won’t come out of the water until the crowds have gone.
- Meanwhile, Edward calls on reserves of energy he didn’t know he had. The thought of all his friends spurs him on to win.

Teaching focus
- Edward has won the race and appears on the president’s barge so everyone can cheer him. Barney is on the second barge.
- They float down the river, and all the elephants spout a tunnel of water from their trunks.
- Edward is proud of being a champion, but all he really wants to do is to return to his family and friends, and have another of those gigantic hippo meals.

Illustrations
- Page 101: Edward is a shy and modest winner. The president is telling him that he is the fastest hippo in Africa.
- Pages 102–103: This picture shows the crowds lining the river and calling out to the champion, Edward. Barney is in the barge behind.

Read Chapter 10 to the class and briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
- Edward’s responses of ‘Gosh!’ contrast with Sebastian’s boasts. He is still the same humble hippo we first met on his eighth birthday.
- His loving family are absolutely bursting with pride now.
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 three chapters, return to passage one (Chapter 2) to start looking at the author’s language choices in detail.

Low order literate orientation – Passage one

Towards the end of the passage we are told explicitly how Edward feels. Up until then we infer it from his enthusiastic and energetic approach to his training. The first part of the passage is all about what he does, when and how he does it and what that looks like. He behaves almost like a powerful and determined automaton: a training machine. It’s the dialogue at the end that finally tells us how he feels about all this effort. He feels terrific! The dialogue also tells us about his relationships with his family, and their attitude to his training. This passage is very important for the resolution of the story, which would not be believable if Edward had not trained diligently.

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

Before this Edward meets Barney, and their conversation shows how modest they both are. They approach the race determined to do their best, and won’t mind too much if they don’t win. As the two of them wait patiently in the queue, the author introduces Sebastian, whose behaviour is in stark contrast to that of Edward and Barney. Sebastian is an unpleasant character who wishes the other hippos, particularly Edward, no good. He boasts, shows off and is a bully. Sebastian doesn’t want to queue like the other entrants and tries to push in but, like most bullies, he backs down when someone bigger stands up to him. Edward and his new friend Barney are in awe of Sebastian because he is so big and loud, and owns a flashy car and clothes. They have never seen anyone like this before. This passage is important for the story because, later, Sebastian’s action becomes the complication for Edward. It is also important that the reader doesn’t like Sebastian so that his final, humiliating downfall is acceptable.
**High order literate orientation – Passage one**

**Text (pages 14–16)**

**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>When this event happens</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every morning,</td>
<td>Nearly every chapter in this book starts with a reference to when the events took place. This chapter, which is about Edward’s training regime, starts by telling us when he trains, which is <em>every morning</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expansions (more information about the time of day)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>when it was still dark</em></td>
<td>First, he tells us that <em>it was still dark</em>. So it is very, very early. The sun hasn’t yet risen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>and ordinary hippopotamuses were still asleep,</em></td>
<td>All the other <em>ordinary hippopotamuses</em> were doing what Edward would have been doing if he hadn’t committed to train for the big race. Telling us that the others <em>were still asleep</em> contrasts with Edward’s behaviour. Edward is special.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>with the sky like velvet</em></td>
<td>Now the author provides a beautiful picture of the sky at this time of day. Velvet is a luxurious material, so this simile implies softness and quietness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>and the stars just starting to go out,</em></td>
<td>This phrase is a way of describing what happens just before the sun comes over the horizon. Just as a candle or electric light goes out, the stars seem to have been blown out or switched off. As the sun rises, the light from the stars fades. At first Edward is swimming in the dark.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**What the character did**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edward leapt from his bed, out of his pyjamas and into his bathing trunks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now are we told who this sentence is about. Edward didn’t drag himself out of bed complaining about being tired or sleepy. He <em>leapt from his bed</em>. In the same single, excited action he is able to get <em>out of his pyjamas and into his bathing trunks</em>. We have an image of Edward flying out of bed and changing into his trunks in one smooth motion, before he even hits the floor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expansions: (using a special technique)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wasting not a second,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The author uses a very clever technique, which emphasises the movement and action, and Edward’s determination. Mentioning the time at the beginning of the sentence shows how important time is to the training and how enthusiastic Edward is.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>looking to neither left nor right,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edward does not distract himself by <em>looking around</em>. The verb is at the beginning of the clause, emphasising how important it is that Edward looks <em>neither left nor right</em>. The implication here is that Edward gets straight down to business, and heads off to the river.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>he ran for the river at the end of the garden, and dived in. Splash!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running to the <em>river at the end of the garden</em> shows just how excited Edward is about his training. He doesn’t slow down but keeps going at full speed, then dives in. One word describes the sound of Edward diving into the river: <em>Splash!</em> This is called ‘onomatopoeia’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First he swam eight kilometres down the river, going as fast as he could.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The author tells us what Edward does first once he is in the river, then expands on this using the same technique as before, putting the action first.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then he flipped over and came all the way back, trying to go even faster.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The author expands on how Edward came back. He uses the word <em>flipped</em>, which tells us <em>how</em>, as well as <em>what</em>, he did.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description of character**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>His little bulgy eyes were closed tight – except for an occasional fast look just to make sure he was going in the right direction –</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The author then describes what Edward looks like during his swim. First he describes his eyes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
while his huge mouth was open one minute, closed the next.

Then he describes his mouth and what it’s doing. The word while indicates that his eyes and mouth are doing these things at the same time.

**sucking up enormous breaths.**

Expanding on what Edward’s mouth is doing and putting the action at the beginning of the clause gives importance to the sucking action. The words sucking and enormous create an image of great power.

**Over and over went his arms, cleaving a pathway through the water.**

The important concept of Edward’s arms tirelessly going over and over is put at the beginning of the sentence. Then the next clause starts with another action, which expands on the image by providing a picture of power and determination. The word cleaving is much more powerful than ‘splashing’.

**And with each stroke of an arm, he gave a powerful kick with a leg.**

Another action is occurring at the same time as the arms are moving – a powerful kick with a leg. Edward is kicking his legs as he moves his arms.

**Whoosh! Whoosh!**

These two words describe what the kicks sound like. The onomatopoeia indicates the speed of movement in the water.

**And no sooner was he back at the garden**

*And no sooner was he back … than* can be explained by using a replacement phrase such as ‘And when he was back … , he . . .’

**than he immediately began twenty minutes of vigorous exercises,**

Edward starts the next phase of his exercise regimen straightaway.

**touching his toes, running on the spot, windmills, press-ups, deep knee bends and two-legged leaps.**

The author uses the technique of expanding on the action, the vigorous exercises, with a list of activities.

**And then, when that was done, Edward put on his dressing gown and sat down to breakfast with the rest of the family.**

Finally, Edward returns to the house to have breakfast with his family. We are still not told how he feels.

Note: Teachers may choose to finish here.
**Structure of text and wording**

**Dialogue/Author comment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogue/Author comment</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘How did it go, Champ?’ Edward’s father asked him. Ever since Edward had started training, his father had taken to calling him ‘Champ’.</td>
<td>The dialogue tells us how Edward and the rest of the family are feeling. Edward’s father is concerned about the training. Ever since Edward started training he has called him ‘Champ’, which means that he is proud of him. The words <em>taken to</em> mean ‘started’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Terrific!’ Edward said. ‘I feel fine.’</td>
<td>We find out how Edward feels from what he says.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And how hungry he was after all that exercising. Six eggs! Four glasses of milk! Ten pieces of toast, each piece thickly buttered and covered with marmalade.</td>
<td>We now see the hippo part of Edward’s personality as he eats a hippo-size breakfast. The author provides another list, this time of everything Edward eats for breakfast.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Watch that diet, Champ,’ his father said.</td>
<td>Again, the father’s comments show what he is thinking. He sees Edward eating a lot and warns him about eating too much. But he still calls him ‘Champ’ because he is so proud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Quickly, now,’ said Edward’s mother, ‘it’s time for school.’</td>
<td>Edward’s mother reminds Edward that his normal routine is about to resume. She wants him to finish his enormous meal quickly so he won’t be late for school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What you could say

**Preformulation**
Let’s look very closely at the first part of Chapter 2, because this is where the author tells us all about Edward’s daily training regime. Morris Lurie writes very cleverly. We get a clear picture in our minds of the effort Edward puts into his training and what he looks like while he is doing it. We will study this passage closely in order to learn some techniques we can use in our own writing. Of course training is no good unless it is done every day.

**Question:** When does Edward’s training happen?

**Reconceptualisation**
That’s right, every morning. Every day, no matter what, Edward trains for the big race. Athletes often train during the first part of the day.

**Preformulation**
The author could have left it at that, but he expands on when the training happens by telling us that it was still dark. He then contrasts what Edward is doing with what ordinary hippos are doing at this time.

**Question:** When in the morning does Edward begin his training?

**Reconceptualisation**
That’s it. When it was still dark, which means it was very early. The sun hasn’t even risen yet. It’s summer, so it must be very early indeed.

**Question:** And what were all the other hippos doing at this time?

**Reconceptualisation**
Exactly, ordinary hippos, that is, those not committed to training for the big race, are still asleep. The author implies that Edward is pretty special. And we are beginning to realise this, aren’t we?

**Preformulation**
But the author doesn’t stop here with expansions. Next he tells us what the sky looked like at this time of the morning.

**Question:** What was the sky like?

**Reconceptualisation**
Yes, it was like velvet, which is a smooth, soft, luxurious fabric used to make expensive evening gowns and so on. The author writes like this so we have a picture in our minds of a smooth, dark sky.

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

Text (pages 52–55)

Teaching focus

Main points to consider when teaching from this passage:

- The passage starts with the word *Suddenly* to indicate that something different or unexpected is about to happen. Narratives must have a complication, and this signals it.
- Again, the author uses a favoured technique, which is to describe a sound using onomatopoeia. He usually repeats the sound (eg *Honk! Honk!*).
- All the words the author uses indicate that Sebastian is shallow, mean and thoughtless. He refers to himself in the third person (eg the Mighty Sebastian). His teeth are *bright, white* and in a *fixed grin*. His clothes are too bright and he shows off when he drives. His car is *sleek, red and flashing*. He has an *easy swaggering air* and boasts shamelessly about his swimming prowess.
- The author again uses dialogue to show the motivations of his characters. Edward and Barney are full of wonder and awe. They *whisper*, while Sebastian *announces*.
- The author describes Sebastian’s colours: he’s a black hippo with white teeth, a red jacket, a green tie and white gloves, who owns a red car with silver wheels. These bright colours ensure that he is noticed and illustrate his personality and motivations.

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 learn about and then use the writing techniques exemplified in this passage. To do this they will need to:

- understand why the author starts the recount of the training session by stating when it happened
- understand the author’s technique of highlighting the action through expansions
- understand the role of processes and dialogue in revealing characters’ motivations and interactions
- engage in joint reconstructed writing exercises in which they take on the role of the author
- understand the reason for this detailed description of the training regime within the overall structure of the story.

Transformations – One

Text (page 14)

*Every morning, when it was still dark and ordinary hippopotamuses were still asleep, with the sky like velvet and the stars just starting to go out, Edward leapt from his bed, out of his pyjamas and into his bathing trunks. Wasting not a second, looking to neither left nor right, he ran for the river at the end of the garden, and dived in.*

*Splash!*

*First he swam eight kilometres down the river, going as fast as he could. Then he flipped over and came all the way back, trying to go even faster. His little bulgy eyes were closed tight – except for an occasional fast look just to make sure he was going in the right direction – while his huge mouth was open one minute, closed the next, sucking up enormous breaths. Over and over went his arms, cleaving a pathway through the water. And with each stroke of an arm, he gave a powerful kick with a leg.*

*Whoosh! Whoosh!*
Teaching focus

**The setting (time of day):**
Authors often start chapters with a reference to when the events happened. Nearly every chapter in this book starts this way. Morris Lurie starts Chapter 2 by telling us when the training takes place, before going on to describe it.

**Expansions**
The author expands on when the training happened by clarifying exactly when it occurred and by building vivid images of what it is like at this time of the day.

By contrasting what ordinary hippos are doing with what Edward is doing, the author implies that Edward is not ordinary.

Next the author builds an image of a beautiful sky. He uses a simile to create the picture for readers.

Extra images of the sky continue the expansion of when the events happened. This long sentence also serves to delay the action, creating anticipation in readers, who want to know exactly what is happening at this time.

**What the character did**
Authors frequently use delaying techniques. Here we are finally told what Edward was doing at this time. The author combines three actions into one sentence to portray Edward's enthusiasm. The word *leapt* is important. It is the only verb in this clause and connotes the energy and motivation behind Edward's actions.

**Expansions**
Authors expand on actions so that readers can empathise with their characters. Here the author puts the action first so it becomes the most important thing readers think about. The point is that Edward is wasting no time.

The author is conveying Edward's sense of purpose by describing what he isn't doing.
After some elaborate image building, the author tells us quite simply what Edward did. Onomatopoeia is used to add interest.

This sentence provides a straightforward description of what Edward did, followed by an expansion of how he did it, using the technique of putting the action first.

Using the same pattern, the author describes what was done followed by expansion of how it was done.

**Description of character**
Authors generally need to describe their characters. It's important that we have a mental image of what Edward looks like while he is training, as his training is pivotal to the story.

Choosing to use the words *sucking up enormous breaths* builds a strong image that conveys Edward’s power and speed. These image-building words reveal the character’s motivation; no extra comment from the author is necessary.

This is an expansion of Edward’s action. The reader needs to understand the thoroughness of the training and what an enormous commitment it is for Edward.

The author emphasises Edward’s powerful, coordinated kicks. The reader is in no doubt that Edward is a good swimmer who will benefit from this training regime. *Whoosh! Whoosh!* are onomatopoeic words that conjure up a sense of speed.

**What you could say**

**Preformulation**
Authors need to decide how they will introduce the setting in their stories. Morris Lurie talks about when things happen at the beginning of nearly every chapter in this story. And he does it really nicely here too.

**Question:** What part of the setting does Morris Lurie write about first in this passage?

**Reconceptualisation**
Yes, he tells us when the training happened. But he expands on when it happened by telling us exactly how early in the morning it was.
Preformulation
He tells us what the place looked like and what ordinary hippos were doing at this hour. He wants to create an image in our heads of what it was like this early in the morning so we can empathise with how Edward is feeling.
Question: What’s the next image Morris Lurie gives us about the morning?

Reconceptualisation
Yes, it’s still dark. Before, when we were reading about Edward’s birthday, we saw that he had been swimming, so it was probably summer. We have to work that out for ourselves. So in summer when it is still dark in the morning, it’s very, very early, isn’t it?
Question: What do ordinary hippos and humans do when it is still dark in the morning?

Reconceptualisation
Yes, I’m still asleep, aren’t you? The author tells us this so we will see a contrast between what ordinary hippos do and what we find out Edward does. Even Edward’s family are still asleep. Even his trainer, Grandad! This is really important because then, when Edward wins the race, we think it makes sense and it’s fair. If Edward had not trained so diligently, it wouldn’t be fair if he won. Authors need to think about these things when they are planning their stories. We will too, when we are planning ours!

Transformations – Two

Text (pages 14–16)

And no sooner was he back at the garden than he immediately began twenty minutes of vigorous exercises, touching his toes, running on the spot, windmills, press-ups, deep knee bends and two-legged leaps.

And then, when that was done, Edward put on his dressing gown and sat down to breakfast with the rest of the family.

‘How did it go, Champ?’ Edward’s father asked him. Ever since Edward had started training, his father had taken to calling him ‘Champ’.

‘Terrific!’ Edward said. ‘I feel fine.’

And how hungry he was after all that exercising. Six eggs! Four glasses of milk! Ten pieces of toast, each piece thickly buttered and covered with marmalade.

‘Watch that diet, Champ,’ his father said.

‘Quickly, now,’ said Edward’s mother, ‘it’s time for school.’
We still have no explicit comment by the author about Edward’s motivations, but we can infer that he is committed.

With no break at all, Edward embarks on the next part of his training, which involves lots of different vigorous exercises in the garden.

Morris Lurie lists these exercises to emphasise their speedy and energetic nature. Listing them helps give the feeling that they are all happening in quick succession.

Edward finishes his regime and then acts as he would otherwise. He eats breakfast with his family members.

The author introduces a little humour. We can imagine how much hippos normally eat. In training, they would eat huge amounts.

The author lists the quantities of food that Edward eats for breakfast. Being a fable, the food is human food. The exclamation marks show how surprising this amount is, even for a hippo.

In this dialogue both Edward’s father and mother speak, each showing their motivation. The father doesn’t want Edward to overeat and get too heavy, while the mother is anxious about him missing school. They each want him to finish eating, but for different reasons.
Transformations – Passage two

Goals of the transformations

Students will learn about and then use the writing techniques exemplified in this passage. To do this they will need to:

- understand why the author introduces Sebastian in a way that ensures readers will dislike him
- understand the author’s techniques in describing Sebastian’s car and clothes
- understand the role of dialogue in revealing characters’ motivations
- engage in joint reconstructed writing exercises in which they take on the role of the author
- understand the reason for this detailed description of Sebastian in the context of the overall structure of the story.

Teaching focus

**Points for discussion**

A new character is introduced

Authors choose to write from a particular point of view. For most of this story, the author writes from Edward’s point of view (e.g., he writes about Edward’s father, not Sam; or Edward’s grandfather, not Theodore). This passage, which introduces Sebastian, is written from Edward’s point of view.

Edward first hears the horn. Again Morris Lurie makes use of onomatopoeia so readers can imagine what the noise sounds like. Next Edward hears someone shouting ‘Make way for the Mighty Sebastian!’ and we soon find out that it is Sebastian himself who is shouting this.

The author introduces this obnoxious character by foreshadowing his loud, aggressive, boastful nature. The reader is predisposed to dislike Sebastian. While all the characters in the story so far have been nice, a good narrative almost always contains some conflict.

Edward then sees the car. The author writes about how fast the car is travelling, then describes it.

Authors describe their characters in ways that influence their readers’ perception of them. Morris Lurie describes Sebastian so that readers will dislike him. When Sebastian is disgraced and embarrassed during the race, readers feel no sympathy for him.

**Language choice**

- Suddenly, down below, there was a great noise.
- ‘Honk! Honk!’ Edward heard. ‘Make way! Make way for the Mighty Sebastian. Make way!’
- There came into view, travelling fast, a sleek, low, shiny, bright red sports car, with flashing silver wheels, and behind the steering wheel sat a huge hippopotamus.
Being the biggest hippopotamus Edward had ever seen is not such a bad thing, except that Sebastian has an unfair advantage over young hippos such as Edward and Barney. Being almost black in colour is not bad in itself, but it does make Sebastian different from Edward, who is grey. The image presented is of a character who is showy and flashy; in contrast, Edward has a pair of lovingly hand-knitted bathing trunks.

**Behaviour**

As well as describing what characters look like, an author usually describes their behaviour so readers gain a clear idea of their personality and motivations. Morris Lurie describes what Sebastian does, which again contrasts with the behaviour of Edward and Barney. Instead of waiting in the queue, Sebastian drives right up to the Official Numbers Given Here platform. Bringing his sleek red sports car to a sudden stop with a squeal of breaks is a sign of a show-off. And, in case the reader is in any doubt about Sebastian’s behaviour, we are told that he has an easy swaggering air.

**Other characters’ reactions**

At this point, the author uses dialogue to reveal Edward’s and Barney’s reactions. The two young hippos whisper because Sebastian is so intimidating. Barney comments on one of Sebastian’s physical attributes that may have a bearing on their chances in the race.

**New character’s behaviour**

We are further exposed to Sebastian’s behaviour, and our first impressions are confirmed. He looks and behaves arrogantly in front of all the entrants and officials. His behaviour is consistent with his appearance.
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

Some suggestions for spelling follow. Teachers will need to make other choices that are appropriate for their students. Some words appear in more than one list.

Examples from passage one
Examples from passage two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>–ing</th>
<th>–ea–</th>
<th>–ou–</th>
<th>–ard–</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tr/av/ell/ing</td>
<td>gr/ea/t</td>
<td>c/ol/ou/r</td>
<td>h/ard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c/on/ing</td>
<td>h/ear/d</td>
<td>br/ou/ght</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fl/a/sh/ing</td>
<td>squ/ea/l</td>
<td>ann/ou/nce/d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>st/eer/ing</td>
<td>ea/sy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/ear/ing</td>
<td>m/ea/n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dr/i/w/ing</td>
<td>w/ea/r/ing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw/agg/er/ing</td>
<td>s/ea/t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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).

**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.

**Example**

**Teaching focus**

Reconstruct the part of the story in passage one where the author expands on when the training took place and what Edward did first. In another lesson or lessons, reconstruct the part of the story in passage two where the author describes a character’s looks and then his behaviour.
What you could say

Today we are going to think and write like Morris Lurie. Remember that Morris Lurie likes to start his chapters by telling readers when the events happened. He does in this part where he tells us about Edward’s training. Can you remember the words he used to tell us when Edward trained? Yes, Every morning. Remember to start with a capital letter and then chunk the words: Ev/er/y m/on/ing. Say the chunks under your breath while you are writing. We need a comma here because the author is not finished telling us about the morning.

Next Morris Lurie expands on exactly when in the morning Edward trained. Can anyone remember what he said next?

Yes. He tells us that it was still dark. It was so early in the morning that the sun had not yet risen. The it he is talking about is the morning, isn’t it? Have a go yourselves, or you can wait for me.

Remember the w sound is made with a wh, then comes en – when.

The conversation about the author’s word choices continues as described above, alongside the conversation about spelling patterns and letter formation.

The students write in their books, the teachers writes on the board. Teachers may allow some time for students who know how to write every, for example, to write ev/er/y themselves first. Students can then choose to use what they know or wait for the teacher (who is careful that they don’t copy letter by letter, but write words in their chunks).

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 passages one and two

Goals for passages one and two of *The Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race* include:

- overall goals such as beginning to understand and use the various techniques Morris Lurie uses, including expansions and influencing readers’ feelings towards characters
- short-term goals such as writing expansions on what happens, or descriptions of characters in a way which influences the readers to like or dislike the characters.

**Passage one**

**Teaching focus**

While writing is one of the overall goals for the teaching sequence, it is during transformations that the discussions relate specifically to the author’s language choices and writing techniques. Therefore, refer to the goals of the transformations on passage one, because without discussion of these issues students will not develop any real understanding during the writing tasks.

**Example**

Describe how Edward eats his breakfast after his training sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing plan</th>
<th>Suggested joint writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting (when)</strong></td>
<td>After he had finished his final two-legged leaps,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansions</td>
<td>and as his family were just making their way to the kitchen and the sun had finally begun to warm the garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What character did</strong></td>
<td>Edward put on his dressing gown and attacked his six boiled eggs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansions</td>
<td>Stopping neither to talk to his family, nor even to cut up his toast, Edward hungrily wolfed down his food. First he spooned the eggs into his mouth, then he washed them down with four glasses of cold, creamy milk. No sooner had he swallowed the milk than he demolished his toast, spreading it thickly with marmalade and munching it noisily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of character</td>
<td>Edward was hunched over the table, smiling and nodding happily.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Passage two
Teaching focus

While writing is one of the overall goals for the teaching sequence, it is during transformations that the discussions relate specifically to the author’s language choices and writing techniques. Therefore, refer to the goals of the transformations on passage two, because without discussion of these issues students will not develop any real understanding during the writing tasks.

Example
Describe a new, likable character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing plan</th>
<th>Suggested joint writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of new character</td>
<td>Just then Edward noticed a hippopotamus moving away from the front of the queue with a number in her hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>She had on a pretty knitted dress the same colour as Edward's trunks, and a big yellow sunhat that covered nearly her whole face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>and she was shyly walking down the steps of the platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other characters' reactions (using dialogue)</td>
<td>‘That’s my little sister,’ whispered Barney. ‘She is really nervous about swimming in front of lots of animals.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘We should tell her we are worried too,’ Edward whispered back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More new characters' behaviour</td>
<td>The hippopotamus came up to Barney and cried out, ‘Oh! I’m too scared. I’ve changed my mind. I can’t swim in this race.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 3**  
**Week: 1**  
**Term: 2**

**Text:** *The Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippotamus Race*  
by Morris Lurie

**Teaching focus:** The use of writing techniques to expand the action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson focus</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the sort of narrative this is: a modern day fable.</td>
<td>Introduce story and characters. Discuss the race, the training and Edward's doting family. Read ch 1-3.</td>
<td>Revise discussion from last lesson. Introduce Barney and Sebastian. Each character has an important role in the story. Read ch 4-6.</td>
<td>Revise and then discuss Sebastian's attributes in detail. Discuss complications in narratives and Sebastian's role in this complication. Read ch 7-8.</td>
<td>Revise and discuss the race. Discuss the resolution. How has each character fared? Read ch 9-10.</td>
<td>Encourage brief discussion about an aspect of the book. Reread sections if necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low order literate orientation</th>
<th>High order literate orientation</th>
<th>Transformsations</th>
<th>Spelling Joint Reconstructed Writing</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authors build images of characters.</td>
<td>Passage 1. Focus on what Edward trains and what it looks like.</td>
<td>Focus on reasons why Lurie has described so clearly what Edward did.</td>
<td>Some ing words. Eg m/orn/ing s/tart/ing</td>
<td>Discuss writing plan from first part of Passage 1. How could a character's actions be described and expanded?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss structure of story: Sebastian's actions result in a complication</td>
<td>Passage 1. Focus on how Edward did after his swim. Speculate on his attitude to the training.</td>
<td>Focus on the description of Edward's eyes and mouth.</td>
<td>Revise then: b/ath/ing. Choose other words from first sentence where appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued discussion of structure of story.</td>
<td>Passage 1. Continue to focus on what Edward did next. He ate a huge breakfast. Discuss the list of food he ate.</td>
<td>Focus on descriptions of Edward's arms and legs. Discuss onomatopoeia.</td>
<td>Revise then: w/ast/ing l/ook/ing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise discussion of characters, focus on readers' empathy with them.</td>
<td>Look at meaning of dialogue. How do members of the family feel?</td>
<td>The author uses two 'lists' in this passage. Discuss first one. This is a list of activities done quickly. How does this list create an image?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sample lesson plan**

In the first few lessons most time will probably be spent on literate orientations, with transformations, spelling and writing being brought into the sequence as students become more familiar with the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class: Year 3</th>
<th>Week: 1</th>
<th>Term: 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Purpose of lesson**
- Literate orientation on *The Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race* by Morris Lurie. Focus on what type of story this is.
- Use transformations to focus on the way authors can choose to describe a setting before describing the action.

**Lesson 1 – Teaching sequence**

**Low order literate orientation**
Discuss:
- the concept of hippos undertaking human activities as well as being excellent swimmers, as are real hippos
- how Edward felt when it is decided he will enter the Twenty-Seventh Annual African Hippopotamus Race
- what sort of hippo Edward is.

Provide an overview of the first 2 or 3 chapters and read them to the class.

**High order literate orientation**
Discuss:
- the image-building language used to describe what it was like early in the morning
- the language used to emphasise Edward’s dedication to his training regime
- the description of Edward while swimming.

**Transformations**
The setting:
- Discuss why the author described the time of day so carefully before he told us what Edward was doing.

**Spelling**
Cut the first sentence of transformations into single words.
Chunk and spell some –*ing* words.
Every morning, when it was still dark
and ordinary hippopotamuses were still asleep, with the sky like velvet
and the stars just starting to go out,
Edward leapt from his bed, out of his pyjamas and into his bathing trunks.
Wasting not a second,
looking to neither left nor right,
he ran for the river at the end of the garden,
and dived in.
Splash!
First he swam eight kilometres down the river,
going as fast as he could.
Then he flipped over
and came all the way back,
trying to go even faster.
His little bulgy eyes were closed tight
– except for an occasional fast look
just to make sure he was going in the right direction –
while his huge mouth was open one minute,
closed the next,
sucking up enormous breaths.

Over and over went his arms,
cleaving a pathway through the water.

And with each stroke of an arm,
he gave a powerful kick with a leg.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

And no sooner was he back at the garden
than he immediately began twenty minutes of vigorous exercises,
touching his toes,
running on the spot, windmills, press-ups, deep knee bends and two-legged leaps.
And then, when that was done,

Edward put on his dressing gown

and sat down to breakfast with the rest of the family.

‘How did it go, Champ?’ Edward’s father asked him.

Ever since Edward had started training,

his father had taken to calling him ‘Champ’.

‘Terrific!’ Edward said. ‘I feel fine.’

And how hungry he was after all that exercising.

Six eggs! Four glasses of milk! Ten pieces of toast, each piece thickly buttered and covered with marmalade.

‘Watch that diet, Champ,’ his father said.

‘Quickly, now,’ said Edward’s mother, ‘it’s time for school.’
Suddenly, down below, there was a great noise.

‘Honk! Honk!’ Edward heard.

‘Make way! Make way for the Mighty Sebastian! Make way! Make way!’

There came into view, travelling fast, a sleek, low, shiny, bright red sports car,

with flashing silver wheels,

and behind the steering wheel sat a huge hippopotamus.

He was the biggest hippopotamus Edward had ever seen, almost black in colour,

with bright white teeth fixed in a hard grin.

He was wearing a bright red jacket and a vivid green tie and white driving gloves, and, as Edward and Barney watched,

he drove right up to the *Official Numbers Given Here* platform,

brought his sleek red sports car to sudden stop

with a squeal of breaks,

and then, with an easy swaggering air, climbed out of the seat.
‘Who is that?’ Edward whispered to Barney.

‘I don’t know,’ Barney whispered back. ‘Isn’t he huge?’

‘I’m the Mighty Sebastian!’ announced the huge, dark hippopotamus, coming up the steps, two at a time, onto the platform.

‘My name is Sebastian, and I mean to win this race! I’m the best and strongest and fastest hippopotamus in all Africa, and the race will be mine!’
Lower Primary

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 3. 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.