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 students in Years 5 to 7 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.
Jamil’s Shadow
Lower Primary
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text

Jamil’s Shadow by Christine Harris. Published 2001 by Penguin Group (Australia). Page numbers provided here refer to this edition.

Go to Christine Harris’s website, at http://www.christineharris.com.au for information about the author and her books.

The book is available on CD at http://www.audiobooksdirect.com.au
Tel: (02) 6259 2835, Fax: (02) 6259 1983, PO Box 162, Kippax, ACT 2615
Jamil’s Shadow
Synopsis of the story

Jamil has recently become an orphan; he is only just coping with his feelings of grief and abandonment. Adopting a bedraggled dog at first seems like the last thing he wants to do. Nevertheless, the dog has an endearing personality and when it saves Jamil’s life, Jamil realises he is ready to love again.

Themes

The themes explored in this book include:

- the pain of loss
- the process of recovery from loss
- the importance of community
- differing world views
- the faithfulness of friends (including dogs)
- non-western lifestyles.

Why use this story?

This book examines the emotional pain of the central character, Jamil, after the loss of his parents. Written from Jamil’s point of view, it explores the slow process of recovery through a series of events that occur in the village. Jamil’s conflicting emotions are described very dramatically as he deals with his loss first by withdrawing and finally by opening up to others.

Many students will have experienced the pain of separation from loved ones, either through death or through other events such as hospitalisation. This story is set in a remote, mountainous region of Turkey. The ‘cyclist in his underpants’ scene and subsequent discussion introduces cross-cultural issues that will be familiar to many students.

_Jamil’s Shadow_ is a good introduction to personification and metaphor for younger students. Jamil’s relationship with the cattle he cares for reflects his initial emotional isolation, a reaction to the tragic loss of his parents. His gradual recovery is reflected in the growing warmth and friendliness of his relationship with the dog that claims him.

The book is also a good introduction for young readers to the literary device of ‘flashbacks’, which here are denoted by italic type. When we meet Jamil he is sad and lonely, but we do not know why. A flashback in Chapter 3 emphasises the great love between Jamil and his mother. In Chapter 4 a series of flashbacks reveal the sad events the boy has endured.
Jamil’s Shadow is a short novel of 12 chapters. There is one illustration in most of the chapters. The book is a good bridge from picture books to fully fledged chapter books and would suit lower primary students. It would also be suitable for upper primary or early secondary students who have any literacy difficulties, as the themes are suitable for older students.

**Structure of the text**

**Passage one**

Passage one (pages 1–3) is a major part of the narrative’s orientation. It introduces the main character, Jamil, and the setting of the story. The introduction positions Jamil as emotionally isolated. This is achieved through the physically isolated setting and the boy’s preference for spending his time with the cattle for which he is responsible.

Passage one foreshadows the tragic deaths of Jamil’s parents. We are drawn in by the author, leaving the question of what causes Jamil’s misery open until Chapter 4. This creates a sense of mystery that keeps us wanting to find out what comes next.

The passage contains:

- observations about Jamil and his daily routine
- reflections that provide a wider view of the setting
- some dialogue, in which Jamil expresses his attitude to life
- observations that express Jamil’s feelings about the cattle
- Jamil’s reflections on the attributes of different animals
- an analysis of Jamil’s feelings
- a foreshadowing of the complication.

**Passage two**

Passage two (pages 42–4) describes Jamil’s emotional thawing as his ability to relate to those around him in a healthy, warm and trusting manner begins to be restored. It consists of a series of actions, reactions, observations, reflections and dialogue that work through the main character’s dilemma.
Language features of the text

- The author uses personification to reveal Jamil’s changing state of mind as the story progresses. Jamil’s relationship with the animals in his care parallels his feelings. As the story opens, Jamil’s preference for the distant, uncaring nature of the cattle reflects his emotional isolation. His tentative response to the overtures of the dog reflects his fear of closeness. The final acceptance of the dog’s affection reflects his emotional recovery and readiness to enter new relationships.
- Contrasts are also used to help reveal Jamil’s state of mind. The contentment of the cattle is contrasted with Jamil’s restlessness; the isolation of the mountain slopes and peaks is contrasted with the closeness of village life; and the warmth of Jamil’s house is contrasted with the iciness of the air outside.
- Flashbacks slowly reveal the answer to the mystery of Jamil’s sorrow. They are an effective way of withholding, then revealing key information and keeping the reader engaged in finding answers.
- The author uses reflections to tell the reader how a character is feeling and to provide a picture of a character’s lifestyle.
- Reflections are used to describe Jamil’s feelings and to provide a prelude to the action.

Passage one

- The setting and the main character are introduced. The author reveals Jamil’s emotional isolation by:
  – positioning him as physically isolated from other people
  – alluding to other mountains, people and villages but not describing them
  – describing the sounds around Jamil, including the whining wind
  – introducing the only life close to Jamil, the cattle, which can neither communicate with nor care for him
  – using speech to convey Jamil’s conflict and longing (the fact that Jamil often talks to himself further emphasises his isolation)
  – using a metaphor to provide a strong image of Jamil’s grief (the cause of which is unknown at this point).
- Settings are described first by providing a board, panoramic view, then steadily moving in to a character’s exact location.
- The central complication of the story is foreshadowed. This device is used to draw readers in and keep them reading to solve the mystery.
- Speech is used to express a character’s thoughts and feelings.
Passage two

- Thinking about the dog’s needs helps Jamil to start healing. He has accepted and enjoyed a meal in the spirit in which it was offered and has begun to remember his parents in a less painful way. The change in Jamil is mirrored by his changed attitude towards the dog. The author achieves this by:
  - sharing Jamil’s hopes and observations
  - personification of the dog (from Jamil’s point of view, the dog seems to empathise with him, possibly because it too has been abandoned)
  - contrasting the atmosphere inside and outside the hut
  - using speech to convey Jamil’s thoughts (lonely people tend to talk to themselves).

- Jamil identifies with the stray dog and its needs. In this passage Jamil imagines the dog knows and understands him. In reality the dog is cold and hungry and acts to fill these needs. In passage two, when Jamil is becoming ready to rebuild relationships, he starts this difficult process with the dog.

Books with similar themes

*Rose meets Mr Wintergarten* by Bob Graham, *The Very Best of Friends* by Margaret Wild and Julie Vivas, and *Onion Tears* by Dianna Kidd are three good follow-up books to *Jamil’s Shadow*. 
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 *Jamil’s Shadow* aims to teach:

- how to read the study passages at 90 per cent accuracy or above
- how to discuss the passages, 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, passages that incorporate some of Christine Harris’s techniques, such as including a character’s thoughts in speech, describing scenes generally and then moving to the specific, and using personification and metaphor.

**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**

**Teaching focus**

- We meet the main character, Jamil.
- The setting is described.
- Jamil is alone in the mountains watching over the family’s cattle.
- Jamil enjoys this job.
- Usually, being alone doesn’t bother him.
- Today, however, something is bothering him: he is feeling sad and lonely.

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

- Jamil lives a rugged existence. How does his daily routine differ from that of the students?
- How can we tell that Jamil is unhappy and lonely?
- What things could happen in our lives that would leave us feeling very lonely?
- What might have happened to make Jamil feel like this?

What you could say

**Introducing the setting and central character**

T: Now this book is set in a place that’s quite different to the country round here. It’s set in mountains. OK, this is the kind of country that Jamil lives in [looking at an overhead showing a photo of Turkish mountains]. Jamil is the main character. This is Jamil here [looking at an overhead of the book’s cover]. We meet him in the very first chapter that we are going to read today. And this is the kind of country that Jamil lives in. OK.

S: Kind of country.

T: It’s very mountainous country. And Jamil has a job and his job is to take the cattle up into these mountains and they’re very, quite steep mountains.

S: He got goats and stuff.

T: That’s right. Oh, you know about mountains. They do have goats and things, but his, he doesn’t like goats as much as...

S: Lots of hills and ....

T: Yeah, yeah this is in the valleys. There are hills and the valleys are the bits that are in between the hills [looking at Turkish mountains overhead]. OK. So, he doesn’t like goats as much as cattle. He really likes cattle, and that’s his job is to look after these cattle. So he takes them up into the mountains each day to find their food. Now that’s his job, and we find that out in the very first chapter.

**Jamil’s feelings**

T: There’s something else about Jamil if you look at this picture. Look at Jamil’s eyes and his face.

S: Sad.

T: Mmmm, Jamil does not feel very happy. Jamil feels like he is all on his own in life.

**Teaching focus**

- We find out that Jamil’s parents are dead but are not given any details, except that he longs for his father.
- Thinking back to an invitation to tea the night before makes Jamil remember a wise saying of his father’s.
- Jamil drank tea with a small group of men.
- The conversation revealed the villagers’ attitude to two foreign cyclists.
- The villagers are remote from the western world.
- The chapter had opened with Jamil watching these cyclists in the distance.
Jamil muses that his father would have known about these cyclists. Jamil pushes that painful thought away.
The chapter closes in the present and with Jamil seeing ‘a movement’. He fears an attack. There is an element of suspense.

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

Discussion points

• What does the presence of the foreign cyclists tell us about Jamil and his life?
• What possible dangers might exist in Jamil’s situation? What might the noise be?

Teaching focus

• Jamil is ready to defend himself, but discovers it’s just a dog.
• Jamil’s vulnerability is made clear to engage our sympathy.
• Jamil wants to befriend the dog but doesn’t – or is unable to.
• Flashback to two months back (in italics) – Jamil remembers his mother bringing him lunch and a warm jacket to this very spot, and sitting, knitting as he ate.
• It’s a warm image of a caring mother and appreciative son.
• We are given a hint that something terrible happened on the day that changed Jamil’s life forever.

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

Discussion points

• Discuss close relationships students have with members of their family.
• These relationships are an essential part of life; without them our lives are incomplete.
• Discuss why the author included the incident about Jamil’s mother coming up the hill one day.
• It is clear Jamil’s mother is no longer around. What do you think has happened to her?
• Jamil is afraid to care in case he experiences pain again.

Teaching focus

• The flashbacks are in italics.
• We find out how Jamil’s parents died.
• We find out how Jamil feels about their deaths.
• He is angry, sad and numb. He feels as if icy water is seeping through his veins where warm blood should be.
• He is scared that he’ll forget what his mother looked like.

Read Chapter 4 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.
Discussion points

- Now we understand the full extent of Jamil’s sorrow.
- How was this revealed to us?
- Discuss again why Jamil doesn’t welcome the dog’s attentions. What might he be scared of?

Teaching focus

- The dog returns.
- A bond begins to grow between them.
- Jamil grooms the dog, shares his lunch with him and leads him to water.
- Jamil is worried by his own reflection in the water; something in his eyes makes him uncomfortable.
- Jamil tries to fight his feelings, but against his better judgement he lets the dog sit with him.

Read Chapter 5 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.

Discussion points

- What do you think Jamil saw in his reflection that worried him?
- Discuss with students the feelings a pet can engender.
- What feelings is the dog stirring up?
- Why is Jamil resisting these feelings?

Teaching focus

- The death of Jamil’s parents has made him fear close, warm feelings.
- When people leave, you are hurt.
- This is why Jamil is not accepting the dog’s advances.
- Jamil forces himself to shoo the dog away before he heads for home.
- The cattle don’t try to befriend him – they just leave big droppings he might step in.
- Jamil is secretly happy that the dog is sneaking along behind him, but he tries not to encourage it.
- Jamil considers it weak to want the dog’s company.

Read Chapter 6 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.
Discussion points

- Jamil is experiencing an inner struggle. What is this struggle?
- Discuss with students their experience of loss (e.g., people going away, people dying, losing pets). Be sensitive here. Relate your own experiences, and then invite students to reciprocate. Do not ask directly about particular deaths or departures and just move on if no one contributes.
- It takes time to recover from big losses.
- Again, consider why Jamil is rejecting the dog.

Teaching focus

- Jamil is looking out the window.
- He loves the old curtains because his mother made them.
- To his surprise and annoyance, the dog is waiting on the doorstep.
- Berna Denzil arrives with food for Jamil.
- She makes him feel better about taking it by asking him to fetch her water in the morning.
- Berna tries to talk with Jamil, but he resists her kindness.
- She pats the dog and invites Jamil to Old Tuncay’s storytelling that night.
- Jamil notices Old Tuncay’s granddaughter, proving that he’s not quite in an emotional vacuum.
- Berna is reaching him emotionally, but he is wary of having too many feelings.

Read Chapter 7 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.

Discussion points

- The people around Jamil understand and accept his grief. They also realise he doesn’t want to appear weak or dependent (e.g., Berna helps him save face by asking him to draw her water from the well).
- Explore how people in the students’ community would worry over a young person who had lost her or his family.
- Discuss the kinds of things people would want to do to help.

Teaching focus

- Jamil enjoys Berna’s pilaf.
- The hut and the cattle link Jamil with his dead parents, and he is aware of this.
- Jamil decides to share the pilaf with the dog, and allows him to sleep inside the hut out of the cold.
- He pretends to himself that it’s only for the night, but he is beginning to establish a relationship with the dog.

Read Chapter 8 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.
Discussion points

• Discuss the change in Jamil’s relationship with the dog.
• What other changes might this signal?

Teaching focus

• Jamil allows the dog to sleep on the carpet square his mother made.
• He decides to light a fire for warmth, indicating that he is thawing out emotionally.
• An earthquake causes the hut to collapse on them.

*Read Chapter 9 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.*

Discussion points

• What is the significance of Jamil allowing the dog to sleep on his mother’s carpet?
• Discuss what students know about earthquakes and their consequences.
• Show the students some pictures of Turkish earthquakes (available on the Internet).
• The author has introduced the earthquake for a specific purpose that will be revealed in later chapters. Why do you think she has introduced it?

Teaching focus

• Jamil is pinned under the fallen hut.
• He is worried about aftershocks.
• He is unable to call out, and all around it is dark and dusty.
• Jamil thinks he might like to die, but then he starts to worry about the cattle.
• He then thinks of his mother’s reaction to him giving up.
• Jamil decides he really wants to live.
• He finds he can’t shout or move, and starts to panic.

*Read Chapter 10 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.*

Discussion points

• Discuss Jamil’s chances of survival.
• Do you think the author will allow him to die at this point?
• Who do you think will save him?
• Do you think you have worked out why the author included the earthquake?
Teaching focus

- Jamil is trapped in the cold and dark under his collapsed home.
- He is thirsty.
- Jamil thinks of good things to help him cope.
- The dog finds him, licks him and lies close by and warms him, making Jamil feel better.
- Jamil confesses to the dog why he shooed him away.
- He was fearful of loving something and losing it again after the loss of his parents.

*Read Chapter 11 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.*

Discussion points

- We are told explicitly why Jamil has been refusing the dog’s advances.
- The earthquake has provided a catalyst for Jamil to finally accept the dog.
- The dog earns a place in Jamil’s heart.

Teaching focus

- The dog barks and alerts rescuers to Jamil’s plight.
- Jamil is set free.
- He probably has a broken leg.
- He gazes around the village, while the rescue operation continues.
- Jamil acknowledges that the dog has saved his life.
- The dog had kept him warm, given him the company he needed and alerted the rescuers.
- Jamil sees Berna and Old Tuncay’s granddaughter looking upset and shocked.
- Jamil tells Berna her *pilaf* kept me full all night to make her feel better.
- He’s recovering from his own emotional shock and wants to help others.
- He thinks about the help he will need to rebuild his hut, and how he can help others build theirs. He is thinking positively about the future.
- Ali Denzil gives him water and Jamil shares it with the dog.
- Jamil asks about his friends. He is thinking and caring about other people again.
- Jamil accepts ownership of the dog and gives him a name.

*Read Chapter 12 to the class and then briefly discuss the following points.*
Discussion points

- Discuss what the dog does in this chapter to cement his place in Jamil’s heart.
- Discuss the various actions and reactions that signify Jamil’s emotional recovery.
- Further the discussion on why the author introduced the earthquake. The earthquake symbolically provides a new beginning for Jamil, whose world had literally crumbled around him.
- Jamil is now ready to think about how to rebuild his life.
- Jamil sees other people suffering loss and is now emotionally ready to help them.
- Discuss the concept of community and how a sense of community is a good thing for people.

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 story and have read at least the first four chapters, return to study passage one to start looking at the author’s language choices in closer detail. You can then spend some of each lesson reading the story to students until it is finished, and some of the lesson working on the study passages.
Low order literate orientation – Passage one

Teaching focus

Passage one comprises the first chapter of Jamil’s Shadow and provides the orientation to the story. We find out about the mountainous setting, Jamil’s daily routine, his restlessness, his fragile state of mind and his admiration for the tough, strong cattle that he tends. Jamil’s physical and emotional isolation is illustrated by this glimpse into his daily trek up the mountainside. There is a stark contrast between the safety and comfort of the villages in the valleys and the harsher mountainous environment. Moreover, this contrast is emphasised by Jamil’s state of mind, which is made clear by his reflections, his solitary utterances and the knot in his stomach, which feels like a stone.

But some information will only become clear if we read on. For example, we don’t yet know in what country the story takes place, we don’t know how old Jamil is, and we can only begin to guess what tragedy has resulted in Jamil’s loneliness and isolation and his need to feel strong despite such feelings.

What you could say

T: Now we’re going to have a close look at Chapter 1. So this is the chapter... This is the first chapter we are going to look at, very carefully.
S: Eeee (reading from overhead)
T: That’s him screaming, isn’t it? Righto. Now this first chapter is where we meet Jamil. And Christine Harris, that’s who wrote this book. That’s the name of the writer, Christine Harris [pointing to overhead]. … Now Christine Harris doesn’t tell us straight off on this page, that Jamil was feeling rotten. She doesn’t say it like that. She doesn’t say, ‘Jamil was lonely’ but we know it from how Jamil reacts to the cattle and everything.
S: Sad reaction.
T: Good. That’s right. He’s got this sad, restless, unhappy feeling. Now, he’s, he’s not feeling good about himself. OK. Now, we know where the story is set from this first part of the chapter. We know the story is in the mountains. So Christine Harris wants us to see what kind of country Jamil lives in. OK? And where he’s taking his cattle. So we find out where the story is set. And then, we also find out, that it’s really nice country that he’s in. And, you know I showed you that picture of the little villages. Well those little villages are, when you go down the hill, the little villages are down in the valleys. All right?
S: How do you feel when you look over your home from up high?
T: So when he gets up to the top of the hill, the villages are all covered up by the trees. You can’t see the roofs. And it looks like nobody lives there. But there are lots of people living there.
S: Tickly feeling.
That tickly feeling? Jamil’s really used to climbing mountains, so maybe he gets a little bit tickly, but it’s a nice feeling isn’t it, to look out? Did you ever climb a hill and look back at your home?

Yeah. Yeah.

You can do that. You can climb up. It feels nice to see your country from a long way. What about at night, when you’re driving in and you see the lights?

Yeah.

So he knows that he can’t see those little villages but they’re all there. So usually he doesn’t feel lonely. Usually he likes it, even though he’s up there all on his own. But today, he’s not feeling good. And we find that out in this bit here [pointing to text on overhead transparency].

OK. This bit down the bottom here lets us know that he’s just not feeling good. A little hint of it here [pointing to earlier section of text], the way he’s chasing the cattle around, we get a little hint, because he’s being impatient with the cattle. But then down here it tells us exactly, and the feeling he has inside tells us he’s feeling really, really bad…

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

Passage two describes Jamil’s first tentative steps towards healing. He has accepted Berna’s generosity and now begins to consider another’s wellbeing. Memories of his mother are becoming less painful and Jamil feels the need to feed the stray dog at least one more time. The dog seems to react in an intelligent way, and the reader knows he would be a good companion for Jamil if only he could open up. Jamil tries to convince himself that he has no need for companionship, yet he is weakening because the dog is such an appealing character and Jamil’s need is so strong.

High order literate orientation – Passage one

Teaching focus

- Jamil’s job is to look after the cattle. One of the main things he must do each day is make sure they are well fed.
- It is important for students to understand that the cattle have no need to hurry. Then they will understand that Jamil’s urgency and desire to keep moving come from within him alone.
- Cattle adapt to routine and if moved regularly get to know the routes and generally move along them in a docile way. For example, dairy cows practically take themselves to the milking shed each day. A regular route doesn’t bore them.
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</thead>
</table>
| ‘EEEI, EEEII’ Jamil waved his arms and shooed the cattle forward. They knew the path. It was the same one they took every day, and they relished the long summer grasses that grew beside it. They kept stopping to eat but Jamil wanted to go higher. | • The cattle’s contentment is contrasted with Jamil’s restlessness.  
• There is a hint of irritation and restlessness from the outset. The phrase *waved his arms* indicates Jamil’s unsettled feelings and *shooed* implies his impatience. Jamil wants to keep moving *forward*.  
• This is a routine activity. The cattle have become used to a regular path and will follow it docilely. The *long summer grasses* indicate that this is a plentiful time of year, and *relished* tells us that the cattle are taking great pleasure in eating the grass. There is no real urgency to move on. The cattle are content with the grass that is available.  
• But Jamil is restless; he wants to keep moving higher. Perhaps if he keeps moving he won’t feel anything, or perhaps being isolated high up in the mountain will strengthen his resolve to be self-sufficient. |
| **Reflection providing telescope type description of the setting** | |
| As he climbed the steep slope, Jamil looked across at the other mountains. Out there, were other people watching over their animals. And nestled in the valleys were small villages, including his own. But he couldn’t see them and it was almost as though they didn’t exist. Up here, the only sounds were the dull thud of the cattle’s hooves and the wind whining around rocks. | • It is rugged terrain, a steep slope surrounded by mountains. This broad perspective is narrowed to that of the main character.  
• The contrast between the isolation of the peaks and the warmth of the villages in the valley reflects the central character’s emotional isolation.  
• The fact that others were doing the same job as him should have made Jamil feel connected.  
• Normally Jamil doesn’t mind the isolation of his job.  
• Using the word *nestled* to describe the villages makes them sound comfortable, warm and safe. Jamil knows they are there, but can’t see them. So he feels as isolated as if they didn’t exist.  
• The *small villages* indicate close-knit communities, but Jamil is both physically and emotionally isolated from them. He can’t see or hear any activity in the villages. We need to infer this information.  
• All Jamil is aware of is the *dull thud* of the cattle’s hooves and the *wind whining*, both quite mournful sounds. |
He could almost believe that he was the only person in the world. Most times, he didn’t mind. His feelings were private and, if he sometimes felt like talking, he had the cattle. They didn’t argue or ask awkward questions. They didn’t even care.

Given what he can see and hear and the loneliness in his heart, Jamil feels completely alone in the world. His surroundings are a metaphor for his emotional isolation.

The reader is encouraged to wonder why Jamil is so lonely. What awkward questions are there to ask?

Jamil is usually content with only the cattle for company because he needs to be alone with his pain. He has retreated from people.

‘Good,’ he spoke aloud and the wind whipped away his words. ‘I don’t care either.’

Speaking his thoughts aloud signifies a strong, emotional outburst even though there is no-one except himself to listen. Jamil is trying to convince himself that he is okay.

That the wind whipped away his words reinforces his feelings of powerlessness.

A knot formed in Jamil’s stomach. He felt as though he’d swallowed a stone and it sat inside him, round, hard, refusing to budge.

Jamil’s desperate loneliness has grown into a physical pain that he can’t get rid of. This observation makes it clear to the reader that he really does crave the warmth of others and that the cattle’s indifferent company is not enough. Jamil is carrying a huge emotional burden.

The cattle stood, heads down and tails flicking, tearing grass from the ground.

The cattle are settled and contented, in contrast to Jamil’s restlessness, although tearing is not a soft word. It tells us that the cattle are intent only on satisfying their hunger.

The cattle are passive and indifferent to Jamil’s feelings.

Every day, all they did was chew grass and drink water. And they had him to look after them and lead them to safe places to eat.

Cattle don’t even have to engage in a search for food or battle for survival. Jamil provides them with food and safety. They are indifferent to his care.

Spending all day, every day with indifferent cattle could be frustrating and demoralising.
**Reflection revealing lifestyle**

Jamil preferred cattle to goats and sheep. Goats always tried to run away and sheep were skittish, flinching at any unfamiliar sound. The wool from fat-tailed sheep might make the best rugs, but cattle were the finer animals. It might rain on their skin, the wind blow dust in their eyes or mosquitoes buzz around when night closed in, but the cattle seemed unmoved by it all. They only became restless when the cows needed to be milked. And Jamil could not blame them for that. It would be uncomfortable carrying a heavy bag of milk around for a long time.

- Reflection on the pros and cons of the various herd animals kept by his people reveals more about Jamil’s culture.
- He prefers the passive, solid nature of the cattle. They are reliable in this way. Their lack of response to things in the environment is seen as a positive trait and reflects Jamil’s current feelings of emotional isolation.
- There are practical reasons why cattle are easier to care for. This relates to the occupation of Jamil’s mother, which we learn about later.
- Looking after the cattle, Jamil experiences the same rain, wind, dust and mosquitoes, which gives us a sense of the toughness of his life and the toughness of Jamil himself.
- Jamil thinks only physical pain should hurt, but he has learned that emotions can also be a source of pain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection foreshadowing the complication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle were tough, strong. Jamil nodded. He would be strong, too, just like them. It was better being alone; safer, and simpler. Usually, he hugged that idea to himself and repeated it like a motto. But today, being alone didn’t feel good. Being alone felt a lot like being lonely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Jamil’s reflections and feelings have resulted from the tragic loss he has suffered, which the reader has yet to learn about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jamil wants to be like the cattle; he wants to block out the loneliness and emotional pain we later find out he is feeling. We are led to ask, ‘Strong for what?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The author is leading us to ask ourselves, ‘Why is being alone better for Jamil?’ and in this way draws us to read on to find out what it is that Jamil is trying to escape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jamil has been trying to block out his loneliness, but this is not working. Perhaps earlier a certain numbness protected him somewhat from his deeper feelings. This is wearing off and now he has to find another way of coping.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

Teaching focus

A series of actions, reactions, observations, reflections and speech that work through a dilemma felt by the central character.

Jamil is not sure he should keep the dog. He doesn’t feel he can give the friendship and warmth it is seeking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>He looked in the pot.</em></td>
<td>• Jamil’s actions and thoughts reflect sympathy for and a growing attachment to the dog, but he is wary of forming a relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>There was some pilaf left.</em></td>
<td>• Being a caring, responsible person, Jamil feels compelled to feed the dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thought</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It wasn’t his dog and probably none of his business. But it wouldn’t hurt to feed him once more, if he was still there.</em></td>
<td>• <em>Probably</em> and <em>once more</em> indicate that Jamil is wavering and that his attachment is growing. • <em>It’s the dog’s choice, and the dog is choosing Jamil.</em> The phrase <em>if he was still there</em> reinforces the point that the dog is free to make choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thought</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Now hoping that he was still curled up on the doorstep,</em></td>
<td>Thoughts and actions that indicate the feelings between the dog and Jamil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jamil peeped through the curtains.</em></td>
<td>• Jamil really wants the dog’s company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The dog lifted his head and gave a single bark.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● The dog responds to Jamil’s interest in two ways; he lifted his head and gave a single bark. The cattle are oblivious to Jamil’s presence despite his care. The dog is very aware and ready to engage with him.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>It was night and there was only half a moon, but he knew Jamil was watching him.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The writer attributes thoughts and knowledge to the dog.</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jamil opened the door.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Jamil’s actions reflect caring feelings for the dog. Jamil is opening himself as well as the door. It’s a simple action, but it has important consequences for Jamil.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the light that streamed through the doorway, he could see his breath condensing in the air. The temperature was dropping rapidly.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The cold environment outside matches Jamil’s emotional state. The light and warmth inside the hut contrasts with the cold outside.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Even when the days were sunny, the nights up here still held a chill. Even with his own fur coat, the dog would be feeling the cold.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Emotionally, Jamil’s life has been too cold and he is starting to accept the warmth the dog offers. The dog coming inside symbolises Jamil letting the dog into his life.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jamil stood back, gesturing for the dog to enter the hut.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Jamil is responding to the dog’s needs, but the dog may also sense Jamil’s loneliness and know that Jamil needs him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>'Come inside. It’s too cold.'</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dialogue reinforces the feelings expressed in the actions.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>The dog didn’t need to be asked twice. He trotted indoors and flopped down on a carpet square with a faded blue diamond pattern.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dog is sure of its welcome and acts as though he has always been there, making himself at home like a friend.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Jamil’s mother had brought it as part of her dowry. Everyone said she had been the best carpet weaver in the village. She had been proud of that.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The carpet square the dog flops down on is very special to Jamil, but he allows the dog to lie on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This carpet square is one of the things that makes Jamil proud of his mother. It is also a reminder of his mother.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>He glanced across at the wall where her loom sat, untouched.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamil reflects on his mother. The loom is useless to Jamil, but it is a reminder of her and so it is important to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The house is a shrine to his parents and Jamil is living within the shrine. This foreshadows the changes later wrought by the earthquake. The shrine is destroyed, which is a form of release for Jamil.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>He didn’t use it, yet he couldn’t bare to part with it. Her fingers had played with the woollen threads that still hung there, and she had sat on the wooden board at its base. While the other carpet square sat there, half-finished, it was almost as though she might return to finish it.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamil had obviously spent many enjoyable hours watching his mother at the loom. His mother had enjoyed this time too, and had been proud of her craft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His mother was in the middle of things when she died, indicated by the half-finished carpet square, which makes it seem as though she might return. It is clear that Jamil has not yet quite accepted her death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Action**

The dog lay, *his head on his paws, on her dowry carpet as though he knew its history.*  
- The action of the dog inspires the beginnings of emotional warmth and attachment in Jamil.  
- The dog cares in a manner the cattle are unable to do. The dog senses the importance of the carpet or, at least, this is how Jamil interprets the dog’s look. 

**Dialogue**

‘You know how to make yourself comfortable, don’t you?’  
- The dialogue reflects Jamil’s acceptance of the dog.  
- The action–reaction sequence demonstrates their growing relationship. The dog is behaving like an old friend. The pilaf becomes a shared joy. 

**Action/Reaction**

Jamil placed the pot in front of him. The dog licked his mouth, then tucked in, chomping into Berna Denzil’s pilaf, almost as fast as Jamil had done.  
Jamil sat on his heels, enjoying the dog’s healthy appetite. After the food had disappeared, the dog licked the pot clean with wide curls of his tongue.  
- The cattle were tearing at the grass in a mechanical way. The dog eats the food in a hungry, appreciative manner that Jamil can relate to.  
- Jamil was at home with the indifferent, docile cattle, but he is actively enjoying the dog’s behaviour and relates to its hunger and satisfaction.  
- Jamil scrapes his plate clean, the dog cleans the pot. They have an affinity. 

**Action/Reaction**

Softly, Jamil scratched behind the dog’s ear and received a short pleased bark in return.  
- Jamil’s actions are tentative and gentle. He is not sure about showing physical affection. The dog reacts with joy.
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

Transformations – One

Text (page 1)

‘EEEI, EEEI!’ Jamil waved his arms and shooed the cattle forward. They knew the path. It was the same one they took every day, and they relished the long summer grasses that grew beside it. They kept stopping to eat but Jamil wanted to go higher.
Goals of the transformations

**Comprehension**
The first paragraph of the story is part of the orientation to the narrative. It sets the scene and introduces Jamil, the main character. It is important for students to be aware of all the information contained in this paragraph and to understand the implications of the author’s language choices.

**Word recognition leading to spelling**
The main spelling focus for these transformations will be engaging in joint reconstructed writing so that students can take on the role of the author to consider the language choices that are important in the orientation to the narrative.

**Writing**
This study passage can support a workshop on writing a first paragraph that reveals a central character’s discontent and contrasts this with a minor character’s contentment through the use of speech, actions and observations.

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

'' / EEEI / , / EEEI / ! / , / Jamil / waved his arms / and shooed the cattle / forward / , / They knew the path / . / It was the same one / they took every day / , / and they relished / the long summer grasses / that grew beside it / . / They kept stopping to eat / but Jamil wanted to go higher / . /''

Teaching focus
- Authors sometimes begin stories with the central character engaged in his or her daily routine, but hint at a complication that contrasts with or belies this routine.
- The paragraph begins with Jamil behaving in an agitated manner, which contrasts with the cattle’s contentment.
- This contrast foreshadows Jamil’s emotional isolation and what we later learn to be intense grief.
- Christine Harris opens the story with this paragraph to encourage us to wonder why Jamil is in such a hurry. After reading this paragraph, we know his wish to hurry up the mountain has nothing to do with the needs of the cattle.
Speech
Action 1:
- The story opens with Jamil making a sound to urge the cattle to hurry up. His actions are quite agitated (waved, shooed) and his cries end with an exclamation mark, indicating impatience.

Action 2
- Jamil’s disturbed feelings are central to the narrative. Introducing his feelings in the first paragraph gives them importance. Authors also want readers to empathise with characters, and this passage is all about building empathy for Jamil.

The daily routine
Observation 1
- Christine Harris introduces Jamil’s restless feelings by contrasting his fast, loud behaviour with the leisurely conduct of the cattle he is looking after.

Observation 2
- The cattle know where they are and where they are going. This is repeated to emphasise the routine nature of the activity. Because it’s a routine, the cattle should need very little prodding to do it.

Observation 3
The author is again contrasting the cattle’s feelings with those of Jamil. Authors can pace their descriptions and actions according to the mood they wish to create in their writing. The author writes about the cattle in a leisurely fashion, with expansions on the initial information. She provides three reasons why the cattle are content to meander.

Observation 4
- In contrast, the word but signals that Jamil’s needs are urgent. The clause is a concise one, with no expansion.
- The desire to get up the mountain does not come from Jamil’s responsibility to feed the cattle. The word but alerts us to this. So we ask ourselves, ‘Why is Jamil so keen to keep the cattle moving?’ For the second time, Jamil’s action (what he wanted) is mentioned.
Transformations – Two

Text (pages 1–2)

As he climbed the steep slope, Jamil looked across at the other mountains. Out there, were other people watching over their animals. And nestled in the valleys were small villages, including his own. But he couldn't see them and it was almost as though they didn't exist. Up here, the only sounds were the dull thud of the cattle’s hooves and the wind whining around rocks.

He could almost believe that he was the only person in the world. Most times, he didn't mind. His feelings were private and, if he sometimes felt like talking, he had the cattle. They didn't argue or ask awkward questions. They didn't even care.

‘Good,’ he spoke aloud and the wind whipped away his words. ‘I don’t care either.' A knot formed in Jamil’s stomach. He felt as though he'd swallowed a stone and it sat inside him, round, hard, refusing to budge.

Goals of the transformations

- To develop an appreciation of how and why an author will develop a character’s personality.
- To develop a writing plan for a workshop on highlighting a character’s actions, reflections and observations to reveal her or his emotional state.
- To develop an understanding of how authors use personification to illustrate a character’s emotional state.

Example of text segmentation

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

As / he / climbed / the steep slope /, / Jamil / looked across / at the other mountains /, / Out there /, / were other people / watching over their animals /, / And / nestled in the valleys / were small villages /, / including his own /, / But / he / couldn’t see them / and / it was / almost as though / they didn’t exist /, / Up here /, / the only sounds / were / the dull thud / of the cattle’s hooves / and / the wind whining / around rocks /.

He / could almost believe / that / he was the only person / in the world /, / Most times /, / he didn’t mind /, / His feelings / were private / and /, / if / he / sometimes / felt like talking /, / he had the cattle /, / They / didn’t argue / or / ask awkward questions /, / They / didn’t even care /.

‘ / Good /,’ / he spoke aloud / and / the wind / whipped away / his words /, / ‘ / I / don’t care / either /.’ / A knot / formed / in Jamil’s stomach /.

He felt / as though / he'd swallowed / a stone / and / it sat inside him /, / round /, / hard /, / refusing to budge /.
Teaching focus

- Authors often combine action and reflection in their writing. This advances the plot while revealing some important information about characters’ emotional states.
- At this stage we are not told what has caused Jamil’s feelings of loneliness, but we are left in no doubt about the depth of his despair.
- Three times in this passage the author writes about Jamil’s perceptions. These phrases illustrate his state of mind.

Points for discussion

**Language choice**

**Action**

- The author sets Jamil up doing something quite routine, then describes his reflections about his situation. He climbs the steep slope, as he does every day. It holds no surprises for him, but allows him the freedom to reflect on his life. In this way the author can share Jamil’s feelings and build interest and empathy for him.
- First Jamil thinks about the mountains.

**Observations**

- Then he reflects on the other herders, and the villages in the valleys. Even though authors often write in the third person, they can still share a character’s innermost thoughts and feelings.
- We are not told why Jamil couldn’t see the villages. At this point we can only speculate.

**Reflection**

- As a device to emphasise Jamil’s isolation, the author writes that even though he knows intellectually the villages are there, because he can’t see them, it was almost as though they didn’t exist. We infer that he is lonely. This is an emotional response.

**Observations**

- Authors use contrasts to highlight various aspects of their stories. Here the contrast between village and herd life and the dull and whining noises in Jamil’s ears emphasise his isolation and unhappiness.
- Jamil can’t hear any sounds from the other herders and the villages. The only sounds he hears are rather mournful and depressing. Had the author said he could hear cowbells or birds, this would have created a cheerful atmosphere. Instead, the tone is dull, windswept and bleak.
Reflections foreshadowing the complication

- Authors often use repetition to add emphasis and power to their writing. Here the author repeats and extrapolates on Jamil’s feelings.
- Not only does Jamil feel that the other herders and the villages don’t exist, but he almost feels that no one exists. His emotional state is such that he is experiencing a great yawning loneliness. This is a very dramatic and intriguing thing for the author to write about a character on page 2.
- Readers will empathise with a character who has only animals to talk to, even though he usually doesn’t mind feeling like the only person in the world.

Observations

- Remember that the author is sharing Jamil’s observations with us. This one furthers the notion of Jamil’s isolation.
- The author is using personification. Jamil has given the cattle the human qualities of not arguing, not asking awkward questions and choosing not to care about him. The inference is that in Jamil’s village (one of those nestled in a valley), where people do care about him, they also argue or ask questions that might be awkward or painful to answer. Here the author deliberately withholds information as to what sort of questions would be awkward for Jamil.

Speech expressing feelings:

Reflections spoken out loud

- Again the character says something out loud. This is a technique authors use to reveal their characters’ true feelings. Although Jamil says he doesn’t care, readers know that he really does. He is in denial. But there is no-one to listen and even the sound of his words is lost in the wind.

Metaphor for character’s emotional pain

- The description of how Jamil’s body feels tells us that he cares very much. The metaphor informs us that Jamil is a very troubled person. The emotional pain that he has refused to acknowledge takes on the form of a physical burden, or pain in his stomach.
- Readers will need to know something about the psychology of suppressing emotions, which the author is drawing on here.
- In this passage the author has very clearly described a disturbed character.
Spelling

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

How to choose spelling words

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

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

Suggestions for spelling

This is a lower primary text, so it would be reasonable to assume that students studying it would be negotiating the transitional stage of spelling. Work on words that help students use visual strategies to notice larger chunks of letters that go together to make orthographic patterns will be essential for them.

Some students may still be negotiating the phonetic stage of spelling. In this case, work on initial consonants and blends will be essential to develop students’ decoding skills in reading and to teach them how to begin writing words.

As you work through Chapter 1 and teach spelling patterns, build up a series of charts and pin them around the room. These charts should contain words that students can recognise out of context, have studied in a systematic manner and have used in joint reconstructed writing. Putting these words into groups will help reinforce the visual patterning for students.

The chart below shows some patterns found in the words from Chapter 1. Teachers could make other choices based on the needs of their class and their spelling goals. Build on the charts throughout the year.
Examples from Chapter 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>–ou–</th>
<th>–ar–</th>
<th>–oo–</th>
<th>–wh–</th>
<th>New vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m/oun</td>
<td>ar/ms</td>
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<td>a/l/oud</td>
<td></td>
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</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).

Examples

relish: 1530, ‘taste, flavour’. Meaning ‘enjoyment of the taste or flavour of something’ is attested from 1649.

nestle: O.E. nestlian ‘build a nest’, from nest (see nest). Figurative sense of ‘settle (oneself) comfortably, snuggle’ is first recorded 1547

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 at the beginning of Chapter 1 where the author introduces the main character, Jamil, what he is doing, and then introduces the cattle. She uses monologue and actions to do this.
- Reconstruct the next part, which describes why the cattle don’t seem to want to hurry up the mountain.
- Finally, reconstruct the part where the author contrasts the cattle’s behaviour with Jamil’s.

What you could say

T: Okay so Jamil is feeling very restless. The story opens with him singing out in an impatient manner. What speech does Christine Harris use to reflect the restlessness Jamil is feeling?

Yes, *EEEI, EEEI* that’s right. Do you remember the unusual spelling she chose? It might be a particular Turkish sort of call.

That’s right…. Don’t forget the special way to mark that this is speech. What must you use to show people are talking?

And what shows us he was saying it in a loud and maybe impatient way?

That’s right, capital letters and an exclamation mark.

Okay so we’ve got the impatient sound now who can remember the actions Jamil uses to express his irritation with the happy, contented cattle? He is trying to make them hurry up and move.

That’s right ‘Jamil waved his arms’. Oh you’re all getting very good with writing Jamil’s name. Everyone has remembered it starts with a capital because it’s a name. Don’t forget the suffix on waved that tells us this is a story that has already happened. It is being told as something in the past.

Okay. Now Christine Harris tells us why Jamil is waving his arms. Jamil is not happily saying hi to someone. That’s right he was herding the cattle. How does Christine Harris tell us he was herding the cattle?

‘And shooed the cattle forward.’ Good. Now what will shooed start with?

And what’s that suffix we use because the story is in the past? Oh you all know a lot about writing this paragraph.

Okay so Jamil is fairly impatient but the cattle are pretty comfortable right where they are. We are given three reasons why the cattle are in no hurry and are feeling safe and happy where they are...

Continue like this, mixing a discussion of the meaning of the text with the reasons for writing it like this and 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 Jamil’s Shadow would include:

- overall goals such as writing short passages in which a central character and her or his emotional state are introduced using some of Christine Harris’s writing techniques
- short-term goals such as writing descriptions of settings that start with the general and move to the specific; discussing metaphors that describe physical sensations relating to emotions; expanding metaphors to intensify an image; using speech to reflect a character’s feelings; writing reflections that reveal a character’s thoughts and feelings; writing action–reaction sequences punctuated with observations and reflections; and personifying animals and objects.

Workshop one: Using metaphors

Using a metaphor to describe a physical sensation that reflects a character’s emotions is a powerful writing technique. Expand on the metaphor to intensify the image for the reader.

- Jointly reconstruct the following two sentences from transformations two in passage one.

**Metaphor:** A knot formed in Jamil’s stomach.

**Expansions:** He felt as though he’d swallowed a stone and it sat inside him, round, hard, refusing to budge.

- Create a scenario, and then use this pattern to describe a character’s feelings of distress. For example:
Josephine’s mother has gone to Perth for a small operation. Josephine knows the operation is not major, but she can’t help worrying. Her grandmother went to hospital in Perth. Josephine never saw her again. Josephine just can’t stop worrying and imagining losing her mother. She can feel the loneliness of life without her mother.

Metaphor: The idea buzzed in Josephine’s head.
Expansions: She felt as though a mosquito had got in and it flew around, whining, whinging, looking for a place to bite.

• Once students are sufficiently confident, expand the scenarios to include feelings beyond distress and loneliness.

Workshop two: Using speech

Using speech to reflect a character’s conflicted feelings allows the reader to empathise with that character.

• Jointly reconstruct the following two sentences from transformations two in passage one.

Dialogue: ‘Good,’
How: he spoke aloud
Expansion: and the wind whipped away his words.
Dialogue: ‘I don’t care either.’

• Create a scenario, then use this pattern to describe the character’s feelings of distress at the time. For example:

Noama’s family has arrived hungry and tired, but she doesn’t have quite enough food for dinner. She has worked hard all afternoon and is very hungry, but she pretends she has already eaten so her family won’t go hungry.

Dialogue: ‘Dinner’s ready!’
How: she sang out
Expansion: and the spoon trembled in her hand.
Dialogue: ‘Come on, there’s plenty. I’ve already had mine.’

• To allow students to apply what they have learnt, have them write a passage that uses personification or metaphor and speech to reveal how a character is feeling. This is not a complete narrative.
Workshop three: Describing settings

Write descriptions of settings that start with the general and move to the specific.

- Jointly reconstruct the following sentences from transformations two in passage one.

**Action which:** As he climbed the steep slope, Jamil looked across at the other mountains.

**General view:** Out there, were other people watching over their animals.

**More specific view:** And nestled in the valleys were small villages, including his own.

**Reflection/comment:** But he couldn’t see them and it was almost as if they didn’t exist.

**Specific view:** Up here, the only sounds were the dull thud of the cattle’s hooves and the wind whining around rocks.

- Create a scenario, then use this pattern to describe the setting.
  
  For example:

  Driving alone at night to a remote Indigenous community:

  **Action which allows reflection:** As I drove over the rise I looked into the distance

  **General view:** I could just make out the glowing of street lights, that was home.

  **More specific view:** On the road ahead I could see cattle standing, dazzled by the glare of the headlights.

  **Comment:** I slowed down and swerved to avoid them.

  **Specific view:** The windscreen was a smear of dust and dead insects, a blinding ooze that made it hard to see.
Joint construction

The students will write a short passage in which a central character and his or her emotional state are introduced through various writing techniques, including:

- the use of speech
- describing a setting, starting with an overall view and then narrowing to the specific
- contrasting the character’s goals with those of another.

The character’s feelings could be explored by using some or all of the following techniques:

- describing his or her beliefs or perceptions, which stem more from a state of mind than observations
- using speech to show that the character is pretending to himself or herself, or others, that he or she is not in this emotional state
- using personification to illustrate or emphasise the character’s emotions
- using a metaphor to illustrate the character’s state of mind and so help a reader to understand it more fully.

Working towards this goal would entail thinking through scenarios in which an individual experiences an emotional state that results in a conflict with other participants and that the character denies. An appropriate setting will also need to be considered. A plan will need to be agreed upon. For example:

**Scenario 1:** At night, on a camping trip, Fredo is very afraid; others are not, so he pretends he is isn’t.

**Scenario 2:** At the beginning of the school year, Kabel is looking forward to leaving for boarding school, while others are sad about it. Kabel therefore pretends that he is not excited about going.
Each of these scenarios would lead to an inner conflict for the character. Discussions and recording of the scenarios could include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible plan</th>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting/Action</td>
<td>Fredo continued chopping the potatoes as he peered out into the place beyond the campfire.</td>
<td>As he sorted out the clothes on his bed, Kabel gazed out the window and down the road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>The dancing black shapes were just the shadows of his brothers standing and joking in front of the smoke.</td>
<td>He knew the smudge at the end of the road was just everyone waiting under the big gum tree to say a tearful goodbye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>But it was almost as though they were giants coming to get him.</td>
<td>But it was as though the bus was already parked there waiting for him to jump aboard and start his adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue which denies feelings</td>
<td>‘Hey, you blokes make big shadows!’ he called out.</td>
<td>‘Well, it’s going to be tough,’ he said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor and expansions reveal feelings</td>
<td>His legs were boneless. Fredo felt like the bones in his knees had turned into water and were leaking out the soles of his feet.</td>
<td>A great weight lifted off his chest. Kabel felt as if there were hundreds of fluttering butterflies in his lungs preventing him from taking deep breaths.</td>
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</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.
### Sample weekly plan

**Class:** Year 4  
**Text:** *Jamil's Shadow* by Christine Harris  
**Week:** 1  
**Term:** 1

**Teaching focus:** Jamil’s unhappy state of mind.

<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** | **Chapter 1**  
Meet central character.  
Loneliness of Jamil | **Chapter 2**  
Discuss the kind of community Jamil comes from.  
Find out some information about why Jamil is lonely.  
The dog is introduced as a hint of danger. | Discuss Jamil’s state of mind at this point.  
**Chapter 3**  
Meet the dog.  
Jamil resists the dog’s friendly overtures.  
Drives the dog away.  
Find out more about Jamil’s loneliness. | Discuss the potential of the dog to change Jamil’s life.  
**Chapter 4**  
Finally find out exactly what has happened to Jamil’s parents.  
Given Jamil’s emotional reaction to the loss of his parents. | Revise, discuss and further explore Jamil’s emotional state.  
**Chapter 5**  
The dog returns.  
Jamil responds to the dog’s overtures.  
Jamil tries to resist his attraction to the dog’s friendly approach. |
| **High order literate orientation** | Contentment of cattle contrasts with Jamil’s restlessness.  
Focus on implications of shooed, relished  
Passage 1: From: *EEEI, EEEI* to Jamil wanted to go up higher. | Discuss how the setting is described. Focus on narrowing of viewpoint.  
How is Jamil’s state of mind conveyed?  
Passage 1: From: As he climbed the steep slope to and the wind whining around rocks. | Jamil’s feelings allow him to personify the cattle. Focus on how the question is raised about what has happened to Jamil but not answered just yet.  
Passage 1: From: He could almost believe to They didn’t even care. | Focus on Jamil’s words belying his feelings.  
Discuss the effect of the metaphor.  
Passage 1: From: ‘Good,’ he spoke aloud  
Passage 1: From: The cattle stood to and lead them to safe places to eat. | Focus on contrast between Jamil and the cattle for which he is responsible.  
Passage 1: From: *EEEI, EEEI!*  
Jamil waved his arms and shooed the cattle forward. |
| **Transformations** | Discuss why story starts this way.  
Discuss empathy with character.  
*EEEI, EEEI!* Jamil waved his arms and shooed the cattle forward. | Discuss why the contentment of the cattle is described. Focus on contrast with Jamil’s restlessness and unhappiness.  
They knew the path / / / It was the same one / / / and they relished the long summer grasses / / / that grew beside it / / / | What questions does this part evoke for the reader?  
Why has the author introduced Jamil’s emotions like this?  
They kept stopping to eat but Jamil wanted to go up higher. | Revise and focus on structure of this part of the text.  
**Speech:** *EEEI, EEEI!*  
**Actions**  
1 Jamil waved his arms  
2 and shooed the cattle forward.  
**Observations**  
1 They knew the path.  
2 It was the same one they took every day  
3 and they relished the long summer grasses that grew beside it.  
**Action**  
They kept stopping to eat  
**Feeling**  
but Jamil wanted to go up higher. |  

---

**Read story with class. Students join in when they can.**
**Class: Year 4**  
**Text:** Jamil’s Shadow by Christine Harris

**Term: 1**  
**Teaching focus:** Jamil’s unhappy state of mind.

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Spelling** | grass/es  
grew  
kn/ew  
Grass originally came from words that meant green and to grow. | for/ward  
w/av/ed  
sh/oo/ed  
c/att/le  
Revise. Join reconstructed writing first 2 sentences. | w/ant/ed  
h/gh/er  
s/summ/er  
k/ept  
Revise | r/el/ish/ed  
ev/er/y  
Revise words learned previously. | |
| **Writing** | Begin discussions about possible scenarios for a writing workshop in which a character experiences an inner conflict. Discuss the setting, other characters, useful metaphors etc. | | | | |
Sample lesson plan

Class: Year 4  Week: 1  Term: 1

Purpose of lesson
• Literate orientation on Jamil’s Shadow by Christine Harris.
• Discuss Jamil’s state of mind. Discuss his conflicted reactions to the dog.
• Read Chapter 3.

Lesson 2 – Teaching sequence

Low order literate orientation
• Review Chapters 1 and 2.
• Review the atmosphere of isolation which matches Jamil’s state of mind.
• Discuss the use of foreshadowing in the next chapter.
• Read Chapter 3.

High order literate orientation
• Review the previous lesson. Invite discussion about the contrast between the cattle’s contentment and Jamil’s restlessness.
• Discuss how Christine Harris gets readers to empathise and appreciate the depth of Jamil’s loneliness.
• Discuss the atmosphere on the mountain.

Transformations
• Review transformations from the previous lesson.
• Discuss the actions of the cattle.

Spelling
• Review words from yesterday.
• Practise for/w/ard, w/ave/d, shoo/ed, c/att/le

Joint reconstructed writing
• Jointly reconstruct the first two sentences. Discuss as part of the orientation of the story.
Jamil’s Shadow – Study passage one (386 words)

‘EEEI, EEEI!’

Jamil waved his arms and shooed the cattle forward.

They knew the path.

It was the same one they took every day,

and they relished the long summer grasses that grew beside it.

They kept stopping to eat

but Jamil wanted to go higher.

As he climbed the steep slope,

Jamil looked across at the other mountains.

Out there, were other people watching over their animals.

And nestled in the valleys were small villages, including his own.

But he couldn’t see them and it was almost as though they didn’t exist.

Up here, the only sounds were the dull thud of the cattle’s hooves and the wind whining around rocks.
He could almost believe
that he was the only person in the world.
Most times, he didn’t mind.
His feelings were private
and, if he sometimes felt like talking,
he had the cattle.
They didn’t argue
or ask awkward questions.
They didn’t even care.

‘Good,’ he spoke aloud and the wind whipped away his words.

‘I don’t care either.’

A knot formed in Jamil’s stomach.

He felt as though he’d swallowed a stone
and it sat inside him, round, hard, refusing to budge.
The cattle stood, heads down and tails flicking,
tearing grass from the ground.

Every day, all they did was chew grass and drink water.

And they had him to look after them
and lead them to safe places to eat.

Jamil preferred cattle to goats and sheep.

Goats always tried to run away
and sheep were skittish,
flinching at any unfamiliar sound.

The wool from fat-tailed sheep might make the best rugs,
but cattle were the finer animals.

It might rain on their skin,
the wind blow dust in their eyes
or mosquitoes buzz around when night closed in,
but the cattle seemed unmoved by it all.
They only became restless when the cows needed to be milked.

And Jamil could not blame them for that.

It would be uncomfortable carrying a heavy bag of milk around for a long time.

Cattle were tough, strong.

Jamil nodded.

He would be strong, too, just like them.

It was better being alone; safer, and simpler.

Usually, he hugged that idea to himself and repeated it like a motto.

But today, being alone didn’t feel good.

Being alone felt a lot like being lonely.
He looked in the pot.

There was some pilaf left.

It wasn’t his dog

and probably none of his business.

But it wouldn’t hurt to feed him once more,

if he was still there.

Now hoping that he was still curled up on the doorstep,

Jamil peeped through the curtains.

The dog lifted his head

and gave a single bark.

It was night

and there was only half a moon,

but he knew Jamil was watching him.
Jamil opened the door.

In the light that streamed through the doorway, he could see his breath condensing in the air. The temperature was dropping rapidly. Even when the days were sunny, the nights up here still held a chill. Even with his own fur coat, the dog would be feeling the cold. Jamil stood back, gesturing for the dog to enter the hut. ‘Come inside. It’s too cold.’

The dog didn’t need to be asked twice. He trotted indoors and flopped down on a carpet square with a faded blue diamond pattern. Jamil’s mother had brought it as part of her dowry.
Everyone said she had been the best carpet weaver in the village.

She had been proud of that.

He glanced across at the wall

where her loom sat, untouched.

He didn’t use it,

yet he couldn’t bear to part with it.

Her fingers had played with the woollen threads

that still hung there,

and she had sat on the wooden board at its base.

While the other carpet square sat there,

half-finished,

it was almost as though

she might return to finish it.
The dog lay,

his head on his paws, on her dowry carpet

as though he knew its history.

‘You know how to make yourself comfortable,
don’t you?’

Jamil placed the pot in front of him.

The dog licked his mouth,
then tucked in,
chomping into Berna Denzil’s pilaf almost as fast as Jamil had done.

Jamil sat on his heels,

enjoying the dog’s healthy appetite.

After the food had disappeared,

the dog licked the pot clean
with wide curls of his tongue.
Softly, Jamil scratched behind the dog's ear
and received a short pleased bark in return.

‘This doesn't mean you can stay forever.
It’s not that I don’t think you’re a nice dog.
Although you don’t have any manners.
But … I wouldn’t be good for you.

It’s cold outside,
so I suppose you can stay here tonight.’

Jamil nodded to emphasise his words.

‘But that’s all. First thing in the morning, you have to go.’
These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 4. However, they could also be used with students in Years 5 to 7 who have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

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

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

Notes

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

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