These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 4. However, they could also be used with older students who have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

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

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

Notes

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

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.
Teaching Notes

Moving House
Lower Primary

Aussie Bites
Moving House
James Moloney
Illustrated by Tom Jellett
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text


Synopsis of the story

In this narrative, a clever boy named Brian displays initiative, persistence and leadership in order to solve a problem caused by some careless adults. He knows the house movers are moving the wrong house, but no one believes him. It’s up to him to stop them.

Themes

The moral of this story is rather similar to that of some other fables; that is, even the small and weak can help the mighty and strong. Here the author has put a modern slant on the theme: Young children sometimes know better than the adults around them because they are more observant and in tune with their environment.

Why use this story?

This is another story in which James Moloney (see Duck Sounds) demonstrates his skill in writing for a younger age group. The study passages demonstrate writing techniques such as describing characters and recounting events.

Structure of the text

Moving House is a narrative with an orientation, complication and resolution. However, the structure varies somewhat from that of other stories, as follows.

Foreshadowing of complication and orientation: Chapter 1

The author foreshadows the complication by providing factual information about the ease with which timber houses can be moved. Then we learn what happens in the street that morning and what Brian’s father concludes about this. Brian doesn’t believe that their neighbours, the Hendersons, are leaving and we learn about their relationship with Brian. The author finishes this chapter with an ominous prediction about the complication that is to come.

Orientation and complication: Chapter 2

Brian and his sister are on school holidays and are unsupervised during the day. We learn that his sister, Prue, is not interested in him or his problems, and that Brian, although very friendly with the Hendersons, is timid with new people. This
important information explains why Brian has such difficulty later approaching the scary-looking Patch. We are involved in Brian’s reactions to the unfolding events: the arrival of the various trucks and his conversation with Kenny. Finally, Kenny reveals what the reader has suspected but what takes Brian completely by surprise: that the men are there to move the Hendersons’ house away. For Brian, this is a problem. He knows it is a huge mistake (as foreshadowed by the author in Chapter 1).

Attempts at resolution: Chapters 3–5

In these chapters we follow Brian as he unsuccessfully attempts to solve the problem. He tries to convince the workers that they are moving the wrong house, but his fear of the big tough boss, Patch, renders him powerless. His amusing attempts to summon the courage to talk to Patch remind the reader that he is just an 11-year-old boy trying to make some adults listen to him. Finally, he jumps into the house just as it is being moved away. He will not give up trying to solve the problem, although neither Brian nor the reader knows just how he can do so, as it seems that it is now too late.

Dramatic event, complication and resolution: Chapter 6

In this chapter we learn more about what a thoughtful and caring boy Brian is as he attempts to solve the dual problems of protecting the Hendersons’ belongings and keeping himself safe. He really cares for the Hendersons, which is why he is doing something as dangerous as stowing away in their moving house. This chapter is quite exciting. The reader is also reminded that moving the house must be a mistake because furniture wouldn’t be left inside a house if it were being moved.

Resolution: Chapters 7–10

One problem is solved when Brian is able to convince the other characters there has been a mistake. However, the adults completely fall to pieces. It is up to Brian to take charge and work out what needs to be done to solve the more pressing problem of getting the house back where it belongs. There are a few hitches along the way as the resolution is carefully staged for maximum suspense, but finally there is a happy conclusion and the Hendersons aren’t aware there has been a problem at all. They even think it has all worked out rather well. (Another couple might have noticed that the furniture and walls had been damaged but, luckily, the Hendersons don’t.)
Language features of the text

Third-person narration

- The story is narrated by a third person, who shares with readers the thoughts, feelings and reactions of the main character.
- Readers are also treated to some ‘asides’ or remarks by the author, who can’t resist commenting on the proceedings (e.g. page 32, How did he do it? when referring to Patch’s ability with the chainsaw).

Time-related language

- Language used to refer to the past includes whenever, sometimes, by the time, occasionally, last time.
- Language used to stage the events of the day includes that morning, as he watched, before long, at that moment, one by one, slowly, at this rate, not for long though, while he watched, quickly, once he was there, any second now (up to Chapter 6 only).
- The author uses many time markers in order to stage the events of that morning and later through the day. That morning is one day in the school holidays, while the Hendersons are away, when the trucks start arriving across the street.

Descriptions and reactions

- In passage one (pages 21–3), Patch’s physical characteristics are described and then his clothes. The narrator infers from Patch’s choice of clothes what sort of person he is: a tough, scary, giant of a man. As we discover, this stereotyping complicates matters.
- In passage two (pages 32–3), the narrator describes Patch chopping down a tree and includes once again the reactions of Brian, the observer. Each action is elaborated and expanded. A simile (Patch is like a possum) is used to make the writing more powerful and to allow the reader to share Brian’s experience.

Recount structure

The author uses a recount structure to describe the incident in passage two. As Brian watches, each action is described. The reorientation of the recount is the completion of chopping down the tree. The author stages the recount using words such as while, Patch began, Each time, When, Then, Once.
Elaboration

The author expands on his writing by telling how, when, where and why in order to elaborate on the events (e.g., mouth open in amazement, like a possum, more closely, to the insides of his ankles, a little higher, into the bark of the tree, from a rope at his waist, to the ground and onto the grass). Elaborating events like this makes the writing explicit, providing readers with the details they need to understand the passage of events and visualise settings and actions.

Other language features

- The author uses a simile to create a vivid image of just how Patch is climbing the tree. He uses the spikes like a possum would use its claws. Continuing this image of agility, the author uses the word shinned to describe how Patch climbs down the tree.
- The author makes the writing more colourful and descriptive by using verbs that tell us not only what happened, but how (e.g., jacked, slipped, munching, called, stirred, riddled, stepped, resting, welded, decided).
- The author uses a variety of conjunctions (e.g., but, as, and, with, when, because, so, if, until, before) to add information, contrast two points, and provide reasons and compare.
- The author also uses shorter, less complex sentences that help readers retain the meaning while reading. For example, from Chapter 1: Brian could hardly believe it. Not the part about the Guthries. He knew they had gone. (Moloney also uses this technique very effectively in Duck Sounds.)
- The author starts sentences carefully in order to stage the story (e.g., Whenever, Just like yesterday, As he watched, Before long, When, At that moment, In that first second, Each time, Quickly).

Books with similar themes

The following books have a similar theme to Moving House. Teachers may choose to read some of these stories to their students: The Magic Finger by Roald Dahl, The Mouse Deer and the Crocodile by Margaret Graetz and The Lion and the Mouse by Patricia Scott. Teachers could use these additional texts to reinforce their discussion about writing techniques, the stance the authors take towards their main characters and the structure of various passages.
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 *Moving House* 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, a description of a colourful character and a short recount, in both cases including an observer’s comments or reactions.

**Literate orientation**

Literate orientation is a pre-reading strategy that prepares students to read the study text fluently, accurately and independently. The teacher models the literate orientation to the text and explains to students how and 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 a teaching sequence is to read the whole story in stages, as quickly as practicable, with a brief low order literate orientation to each chapter or section. It is suggested that teachers include a discussion before and after each chapter to make sure students understand some of the inferences a literate reader might make. Note that the inferences provided here are suggestions only and do not constitute the only inferences that could be drawn from the text. Class discussions might include the following points:
- Characters’ motivations, feelings, intentions, thoughts and relations with each other. For example, Patch is much more powerful than Brian, but Brian is more resourceful than Patch.
- Choice of some words, such as why the author needs to tell readers that Brian knew the Hendersons well; or that, even though Prue was left in charge, she went straight back to bed. There are no illustrations of Prue, so readers must imagine what she looks like.
- Not only did Brian know the Hendersons well, but he liked them very much. In fact, he liked them enough to brave Patch and the dangers of travelling in a moving house to set things right for them.
- Patch had never made a mistake moving a house before, so he wasn’t prepared for the problem.
- The illustrations of Brian with each of the Hendersons show a comfortable, familiar and long-standing relationship. The first illustration of Patch reinforces Brian’s view that he is strong, powerful and very scary. A later illustration shows Patch sitting hunched up and in despair as he faces his problem.
- The Hendersons are even older than Brian’s grandparents, so they can be a little vague at times. Patch is powerful and experienced, but he still needs the help of a small, rather timid boy to solve his problem.

**Teaching focus**

- This text can be read, studied and discussed over a few weeks.
- Students will learn some valuable writing techniques they can use in their own writing by looking closely at some passages.

**Summary of story**

- The main character is Brian, who is 11.
- Brian is on school holidays and, while his older sister is at home, he is unsupervised.
- There is a big commotion going on across the road and Brian gradually realises that the Hendersons’ house is being removed.
- Brian knows the Hendersons very well and so knows a terrible mistake is being made. He tries very hard to tell the workers this.
- Brian is only a child and a bit afraid of the workers, especially Patch, who is big, strong and tough-looking. He fails in his attempts to get the men to listen (and neither his father nor his sister listened earlier in the story).
- In desperation and despite the danger, Brian stows away in the house as it is being moved.
- Finally the men listen to Brian and, when they realise they have moved the wrong house, they feel confused and unsure about what to do. Brian takes charge and gets the house back onto the Hendersons’ block and fixed up.
- The twist at the end of the story is that Brian and the workers are worried that the Hendersons will be angry about the tree that had to be chopped down to move the house. However, it was riddled with white ants and the couple were planning to get rid of it. (This was foreshadowed in Chapter 1.)
The theme is that a young child is the only one who realises there is a problem to be solved and the only one clever enough to solve it. As mentioned earlier, this is a modern slant on the idea that even the small and weak can help the mighty and strong.

**Front cover illustration**
- The house is on the back of the truck.
- The size of truck driver compared with Brian.
- Brian’s indecision and helplessness, but also his thoughtfulness and determination to do something.

**Teaching focus**

### Foreshadowing of complication and orientation
- The comments at the start of Chapter 1 about moving timber houses let readers know what the complication will be.
- Brian’s father assumes that the Hendersons are moving when he sees a big truck (the sign on truck is too faded to read).
- Brian knows the Hendersons well and doesn’t believe they are moving.
- Information about Brian’s close relationship with the Hendersons: for example, unlimited chocolate biscuits, conversations under the gum tree, the Hendersons’ vagueness and the comment that they are older than Brian’s grandparents.
- The Hendersons aim to live in their house for a long time yet.
- Brian can’t believe they would leave without telling him.
- The narrator’s comment about the pending complication.

*Read Chapter 1 to the class.*

**Teaching focus**

### Orientation and complication
- Brian is unsupervised all day during the holidays. (Prue doesn’t count. She is not interested in even getting out of bed.)
- Brian has nothing else to do but worry about the Hendersons moving.
- As the trucks arrive, Brian gets a bad feeling, although he still doesn’t know what will happen (the reader has by now put all the facts together).
- Brian decides to find out for himself; however, he is not very brave and expects Kenny to be unfriendly, just as later he expects Patch to be unapproachable.
- Kenny reveals the complication; that is, the house is to be moved.

*Read Chapter 2 to the class.*
Teaching focus

Attempts at resolution

- Brian tentatively points out the mistake.
- In the face of the adults, who are certain they are right, Brian loses confidence.
- Brian wants to speak to the boss but, when he sees him, he is too scared. To Brian he is a fearsome giant (page 24).
- Brian retreats back home.
- Brian observes that the house-moving process is happening very quickly (there are a lot of details about how it is done).
- Brian resolves once again to summon the courage needed to tell the men about the mistake.
- Brian attempts to gain courage by dressing up like Patch, drawing tattoos on his arms with a felt pen and even considering shaving his head. All this reminds the reader that he is just a kid, after all.
- What little courage Brian has disappears when he sees the huge Patch wielding a chainsaw. He watches from inside his house as Patch expertly fells the Hendersons’ gum tree, leaving just a stump (page 33).
- This is even more of a disaster than moving the house. A house can be put back, but a tree cannot. Remind students that Mr Henderson was talking about getting the tree cut down because it was infested with white ants. At this point in the story though, Brian doesn’t remember that.
- Brian feels helpless, as it seems nothing will stop the men from moving the house now.
- He has one last idea, but it is not a very good one. He sets up a wrestling game on his computer using wrestlers that look like himself and Patch. Then he cheats on the game so that he wins. He thinks he is now ready to confront Patch, but when he goes outside he is too scared to go anywhere near him.
- Finally, Brian summons some courage and yells out to Patch, but it is really too late and he can’t be heard above the noise of the trucks.
- When he decides to get closer in order to be heard, Kenny picks him up and plonks back onto the footpath (fortunately, because he was in danger).
- The Hendersons’ house begins to move down the street and, as a last resort, Brian jumps into it and becomes a ‘stowaway’. He knows he has to get the men to listen.
- Brian hasn’t solved the problem, but at least he is still on the job. The reader has no idea what will happen next.

Read Chapters 3–5 to the class.
Teaching focus

Dramatic event

• **Orientation:** In the moving house, Brian can see out of the window other houses in his street slowly moving past. The floor under Brian becomes unsteady as the truck picks up speed.

• **Complication/Resolution:** Pictures are being shaken off the walls and are breaking. Brian solves the problem by collecting them and putting them safely in a cupboard. Next the sliding furniture becomes a danger to Brian. He solves this problem by hiding in the broom cupboard. In fact, that is where he stays until well after the house has come to a halt.

• The purpose of this dramatic event is to illustrate just how persistent, resourceful, caring and ultimately sensible Brian is. The reader already knows that he is timid, but now his personality is more fleshed out. This is also a very exciting piece of action that moves along quite quickly. Then, *At last, everything was still*. The author has cleverly brought the reader to anticipate that a resolution is imminent.

*Read Chapter 6 to the class.*

Teaching focus

Resolution

• Luckily, the house has been moved to a house parking lot and not onto someone else’s property.

• Brian is discovered, and is afraid of what Patch will do. Patch surprises him by being very concerned and good natured about the stowaway.

• Brian finds he is no longer afraid and can at last speak up: he tells the men that moving the Hendersons’ house was a huge mistake. This news is at first met with laughter.

• It is only when Brian discovers that the address contains an extra number ‘1’, which is obscured by a fold in the paper, that he finally has the proof that he is right.

• Patch is horrified when he realises that they have moved the wrong house. It is a huge mistake for a reputable house moving company to make. He is unable to work out a resolution for his problem because this has never happened before. He is not as resourceful a character as Brian has proved to be.

• Brian comes up with the solution. He cares about the Hendersons and knows they would want their house back. He thinks logically about what happens to houses after they have been moved and encourages Patch and his men just to move the house back to where it came from and act like they are setting it up somewhere new. When the workers realise this is possible, they are hopeful they can put things right.

• ‘Let’s get moving,’ orders Brian, just like a real boss! The house is taken back to where it all started.
When they arrive back in front of Brian’s house, Brian discovers he is in trouble with Prue, who is belatedly performing her duties as babysitter.

The author doesn’t want the reader to think much of her, even inviting the reader to pass various stereotypical judgements on her.

She hands Brian a postcard that reveals a new problem: the Hendersons will be back that very afternoon.

There are a few exciting hours while everything is reconnected. Brian is the boss and gets things happening. He also tidies up inside the house.

Just when they think it’s all done they notice the tree stump where the gum tree should be, and the Hendersons are coming round the corner and into the street.

The Hendersons are naturally not very pleased to see all the workers and Brian in their front garden.

Patch and the workers have difficulty explaining the story, so Brian tries to explain the mix-up. He feels guilty about not telling the workers earlier and preventing the mistake (even though the reader knows he tried really hard).

Fortunately, the Hendersons misunderstand the ‘mistake’, which they think relates to chopping down the wrong tree.

The story ends with a sense of relief for Brian and the workers.

*Read Chapters 7–10 to the class.*

**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**

When low order literate orientation on the whole book is complete, refine the focus to study passage one (pages 21–3) and then passage two (pages 32–3).

**Low order literate orientation – Passage one**

The following low order literate orientation notes provide some suggestions for the first lessons on passage one. Teachers can then determine the focus of each lesson based on their goals for the teaching sequence, the development of these goals in each lesson and the common knowledge about the passage shared by the teacher and students at that particular stage of the teaching sequence.
As there are many layers of meaning in any story, teachers also have to decide on the language features that are important to each focus. For example, one focus could be to show how James Moloney includes information in the orientation of the story (that the gum tree is riddled with white ants) that is important to the resolution of the story, when the Hendersons return home from holiday. There would not have been a good resolution if they had not needed to get rid of the tree.

Text (pages 21–3)

At that moment, the door opened and a man stepped out. He was nearly two metres tall. But that was not what made Brian stop dead in his tracks. In that first second, Brian knew exactly why the man was called Patch. Over one eye, held in place by a narrow string, was a black eye patch.

That was just the start. Brian’s feet seemed frozen to the grass as he watched this giant come closer. The man’s head was bald and, since it was a hot day, the sweat shone on his scalp. His t-shirt was black like the eye patch and tight around the arms. Look at those muscles, thought Brian.

There was a picture on the chest of his t-shirt, too. It was not the kind of picture you would show your grandmother. Not unless she was into mud-wrestling. In fact, not unless she was a champion mud-wrestler. The caption under this picture said ‘Hard as Nails’.

Teaching focus

Brian hears about Patch from Kenny and thinks it will be easy to tell Patch that he thinks they are moving the wrong house. Patch doesn’t sound like a scary name and Brian imagines a dog named Patch, a big slobbering puppy … playful and friendly. Unfortunately, Brian is timid and when he finally sees this giant, he can’t say a word. This passage is important because it describes Patch’s appearance and Brian’s reaction to it. Brian makes assumptions about Patch’s personality, and both the reader and Brian are led to believe that Patch is scary and tough. Later, of course, it is Brian who takes charge, but when he first sets eyes on Patch, he is frozen with fear.

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

If Brian is not already scared enough of Patch, he then witnesses his strength and agility as he effortlessly chops down the gum tree. This passage is important because it illustrates just how strong Patch is and reinforces Brian’s fear of him.

Now that the tree has been chopped down, there is nothing in the way of moving the house. Up until this point in the story, Brian has been hopeful that the tree would prevent the removal. Even if the house is returned, the Hendersons could still be very angry about the destruction of the tree. Clever readers will remember the comment about the tree’s health at the beginning of the story. The movers are not aware of this issue.

Text (pages 32–3)

… While he watched, mouth open in amazement, Patch began to climb the tree like a possum. How did he do it? The boy looked more closely and, sure enough, he saw what was happening. Patch had special spikes strapped to the insides of his ankles. Each time he climbed a little higher, he dug the spikes into the bark of the tree.

When he reached the first branch, he pulled up the chainsaw that dangled from a rope at his waist. The motor began its rattling roar and down came the first branch, then another and another until the tree was bare. Then he cut off the top half of the trunk and let it plunge to the ground. Quickly, he shinnied down the tree and onto the grass. Once he was there, the chainsaw buzzed again and all that was left of that gum tree was a stump low enough to sit on.

Teaching focus

- The author could have just written that Patch chopped down the tree. However, this recount is written in great detail and includes Brian’s reactions, so the reader can view events with the same amazement as Brian. This is a strategy authors use to describe things, people or events.

- Brian’s reactions are included in the recount so readers can get the full impact of Patch’s strength and power. Moving houses and trees – it’s all in a day’s work for Patch. Unfortunately, checking that he has the right house seems beyond him, and this allows Brian to be the hero of this story.
High order literate orientation – Passage one
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>Staged introduction of a character</strong>&lt;br&gt;At that moment, the door opened and a man stepped out.</td>
<td>This is when Brian first sees Patch. <em>At that moment</em> is the exact moment Brian starts to walk towards the car. In fact, three things happen at that moment, almost simultaneously: Brian takes a step towards the shiny black car; the car door opens; and a man steps out of the car. Brian is taking a step because he wants to talk to the boss about the mistake that has been made. He is not afraid because he has been told the man’s nickname is Patch. Brian has associated this name with a playful, slobbering and very friendly puppy. The reader learns at the same time as Brian that this assumption is very wrong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description – Physical characteristic</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He was nearly two metres tall.</td>
<td>Next, there is an estimate of just how tall the man is. As he unwinds himself from the car, his height is the first thing Brian notices about him. The author tells us not that he is two metres tall, but that he is <em>nearly two metres tall</em>. The image here is of great height, which could be linked to great strength. Patch may as well be two metres tall, which is above average height for a man, and for someone small like Brian this man would seem huge. Scary things in books and movies are often big and tall.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brian's reaction (physical)

**But that was not what made Brian stop dead in his tracks.**

Something unexpected happens here. Even though height can be scary, the man’s great height is not what stops Brian in his approach towards the car. Something even scarier than the man’s great height makes him stop. The author says Brian was stopped dead in his tracks, which means he was on a trajectory towards the car, rather like he was on train tracks. His destination was the car.

Brian's reaction (mental)

**In that first second, Brian knew exactly why the man was called Patch.**

Again, the author talks about this same moment in time, only here he refers to it as that first second. It is the same time referred to earlier as that moment. There is a lot happening all at the same time: Brian takes a step towards the boss’s car; the car door is opened; a very tall man steps out of the car; Brian realises why the man’s nickname is Patch, although the reader has not been told yet. In the next sentence we find out that the man is wearing a black eye patch over one eye. This is unusual and brings to mind vicious pirates, etc. Brian imagines that this man is very tough, and stops walking towards the car. Here five things happen in the one moment in time.

Description – Clothes

**Over one eye, held in place by a narrow string, was a black eye patch.**

The man is wearing a black eye patch, which is held in place by a narrow string that goes around his head. What the reader has to infer here is that the covered eye is damaged and so probably doesn’t look very good. The idea here is to make the reader ‘squeamish’.
**Author’s device alluding to more expansions**

| That was just the start. | That was just the start refers to all the things previously mentioned. The just tells us that what has happened so far is only the beginning – now even more amazing things will be noticed by Brian. |

**Brian’s reaction (physical)**

| Brian’s feet seemed frozen to the grass as he watched this giant come closer. | Brian is still stopped dead in his tracks, and now his feet are behaving as if they are frozen to the grass. When something is frozen to something else it is well and truly stuck, so even if Brian wanted to move, he couldn’t. This is a warning sign of fear. Sometimes we run and sometimes we stay (fight or flight). Brian is feeling stuck as he watches this scary, huge man come closer to him. |

**Description – Physical characteristic**

| The man’s head was bald | Brian continues to notice things about Patch. He can observe all these things because Patch is coming closer gradually and Brian himself is not going anywhere. Brian doesn’t know if the man is naturally bald or has shaved his head. Either way, he looks pretty tough. |

**Description – Expansion**

| and, since it was a hot day, the sweat shone on his scalp. | The word since is another way of giving a reason for something. Because it is a hot day, the man’s head is sweating. Somehow it seems that sweating is a tough, manly thing to do. All this adds to Brian’s fear of the man. |
### Description – Clothes

**His t-shirt was black like the eye patch**

The man is wearing a black t-shirt, which is traditionally part of the ‘tough guy’ uniform.

### Description – Expansion

**and tight around the arms.**

The t-shirt is tight around the arms and straightaway the reader knows why. It’s not because Patch has fat or flabby arms, but because he has big muscles!

### Brian’s reaction (mental)

**Look at those muscles, thought Brian.**

Next there is a mental reaction from Brian confirming what the reader already suspects. *Look at those muscles* can only mean one thing: those muscles are big.

### Description – Clothes

**There was a picture on the chest of his t-shirt, too.**

Not only is the man wearing clothes that send a message of toughness, but he has text and a picture on his t-shirt so no-one can have any doubt about this. The author doesn’t describe the picture, but rather provides a hypothetical reaction to it. From the illustration we can see that it’s a tough-looking lady with big, flexed biceps.
It was not the kind of picture you would show your grandmother. Not unless she was into mud-wrestling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description – Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rather than tell us what kind of a picture is on the man’s t-shirt, the author tells us what kind of a picture it isn’t; that is, it is not the kind you would show to your grandmother. The inference here is that most grandmothers are older and gentler than the rest of us and don’t have the strength or inclination for violently physical activities. Therefore the ‘average’ grandmother would not like this picture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, not unless she was a champion mud-wrestler.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description – Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The grandmother who would appreciate this t-shirt would not only like watching mud-wrestling, but would have to be a mud-wrestling champion. The t-shirt further adds to Brian’s developing impression that Patch is someone to be feared.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The caption under this picture said ‘Hard as Nails’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description – Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The text under the picture reinforces Patch’s toughness. ‘Hard as Nails’ is very hard. This simile means that a person won’t give in or be swayed by others. Here it could also be referring to muscles that are strong and hard. Brian jumps to conclusions by stereotyping Patch according to his appearance. Later on, even though Patch talks to him as anyone else might, Brian panics and runs back into his house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

### Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observer’s reactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>While he watched, mouth open in amazement,)</em></td>
<td>The word <em>while</em> tells the reader that two things are happening at the same time. Brian is watching Patch with his mouth open and Patch begins to climb the tree. Brian's reaction is described before we know what he is reacting to. His mouth is open in amazement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First event</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Patch began to climb the tree like a possum.</em></td>
<td>The author explains why Brian is amazed. Moloney describes Patch’s climbing skills using another simile: Patch can climb like a possum. Possums have strong claws that can hold on to tree bark while they climb. Patch is climbing as if he has sharp claws that can dig into bark. The author provides a vivid picture of Patch climbing quickly and sure-footedly up the trunk of a tall tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observer’s reactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>How did he do it?</em></td>
<td>Here the author tells us what Brian is thinking. He doesn’t say ‘thought Brian’, so the reader needs to infer this. The reader is wondering the same thing as Brian at this point: how can a human climb like a possum? Brian really wants to know how Patch does it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The boy looked more closely and, sure enough, he saw what was happening. In order to find out how it is done, The boy, that is, Brian, looks even more closely. Now he looks particularly at Patch’s feet and, sure enough, he works out the ‘trick’. The expression sure enough is used here to show that Brian expected to work out the trick if he looked closely. The reader gets the impression that Brian looked carefully at Patch’s hands and feet to see how he was able to climb like a possum.

Patch had special spikes strapped to the insides of his ankles. These are obviously special tree-climbing spikes made for tree loggers. They are strapped firmly to Patch’s ankles so there is no risk of them coming off and causing an accident. Specifically, they are strapped to the insides of his ankles. This is why Brian has to look closely to see them. It is also why Patch’s movement reminds Brian of how a possum climbs a tree.

Each time he climbed a little higher, he dug the spikes into the bark of the tree. Every time Patch moves one hand or foot higher up the tree, he digs the spikes on his ankles into the bark. This keeps him firmly in one spot while he repeats the process to work his way up the tree.
**Second event**

When he reached the first branch, he pulled up the chainsaw that dangled from a rope at his waist.

As Brian watches, Patch continues climbing in this fashion until he reaches the first branch. The author tells us that at the same time as he reaches the branch he pulls up the chainsaw, which has been dangling on a rope. The reader already knew that Patch had a chainsaw, but the author hasn’t said until now that he has it with him – this is so the author can stage events and create suspense. Patch must be very strong to be able to climb the tree while also carrying a chainsaw at his waist. Now the reader and Brian finally know for sure why Patch is climbing the tree: it is in the way of the truck loaded with the Hendersons’ house. The tree that Brian initially thought would keep the house where it should be is no longer an impediment. It can be dispatched by one strong, skilled man.

The motor began its rattling roar

Although the reader knows that Patch started the chainsaw, the author tells us that the motor begins its roar almost as if it had a life of its own. An animal roars, and the chainsaw is like some ferocious beast. It is only the word rattling that relates the noise to that of a machine.

and down came the first branch, then another and another until the tree was bare.

In order to show how quickly Patch is moving, the author suddenly speeds up the recount. We read that the first branch came down. We are not told how, but must infer that Patch sawed it right through so that it separated and fell to the ground. The next branches fall even more quickly. We don’t know how many, just that they all came down in quick succession. The tree is now bare.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Then</em> he cut off the top half of the trunk and let it plunge to the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Then</em> tells us what Patch does next. While still clinging to the tree, he is able to cut off the top half. Patch waits while the treetop falls to the ground. He must be quite high because the author uses the word ‘plunged’ to show that the treetop picks up quite a bit of speed as it falls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fourth event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Quickly</em>, he shinnied down the tree and onto the grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Quickly</em> tells us how Patch climbs down. It is inferred that he has had plenty of practice, and is strong besides, so he is fast and accurate. The author uses the word <em>shinnied</em>, which is another word for climbing using the hands and legs or shins. Again, this is a reference to Patch’s possum-like climbing skills. He lands on the grass.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fifth event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Once</em> he was there, the chainsaw buzzed again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Once</em> tells us that the moment Patch reaches the ground, the next thing happens. Again, the author writes as though the chainsaw has a mind of its own. Patch doesn’t need to put much effort into this job. No wonder Brian is terrified of Patch. He is a strong man who can control a powerful machine with ease, bringing down a mighty tree in just a few minutes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and all that was left of that gum tree was a stump low enough to sit on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stump is the only thing left after all this activity. It’s not a tall stump, but low enough for a person to sit on, or a truck to drive over. Now there is nothing to get in the way of the truck removing the Hendersons’ house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transformations

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

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

Transformations – Passage one
Here the reader needs to understand why it is that Brian finds it impossible to approach Patch with his suspicion that the men are moving the wrong house. It was mature of him to ask Kenny if he could speak to Patch, but Patch’s appearance renders him immobile with fear. Before the car door opened, Brian was imagining that Patch would be like a playful pup. The reality of his appearance is in stark contrast to his expectations.

Goals of the transformations

Comprehension
This paragraph forms part of the orientation to the story. It is of a description of the house mover, Patch, through Brian’s eyes. Patch looks and sounds scary, but in fact is a gentle person. Brian has judged him by his appearance. It is important for students to be aware of how Brian views this character, because it explains Brian’s inability to approach Patch about the wrong house being moved.

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
Joint reconstructed writing on this passage will prepare students for other writing exercises in which they can experiment with Moloney’s strategy for writing descriptions of characters and the reactions of observers. Here the author has written about Patch’s appearance and Brian’s reaction to it.
Teaching focus

- The author describes Patch in detail so readers can see him as Brian does. Note how Brian’s perceptions of Patch conflict with what he is really like.
- Brian’s reactions are included in the description of Patch so readers can empathise with Brian and understand why he finds it so difficult to approach the man.
- An illustration is included to augment the description.
- The author makes the humorous comment that the t-shirt is not one you would show to your grandmother. Humour is also used elsewhere in the story to add to descriptions.

Language choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points for discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staged introduction of a character</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The author stages the description of Patch by starting off, <em>At that moment</em>. This is the moment Brian decides he will talk to the boss and straighten everything out. After being told that <em>a man stepped out</em>, the reader expects more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description – Physical characteristic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A description of the man’s appearance follows. The author starts with the man’s height, which creates the image of a giant for Brian and readers of his age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brian’s reaction (physical)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The author starts the next sentence with <em>But</em>, so we know something surprising is coming. The author continues to stage the description by describing Brian’s reactions before telling us the cause of these. This strategy builds empathy for Brian, as well as suspense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brian’s reaction (mental)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The author continues to draw out the description. Here he mentions that something besides the man’s great height has scared Brian, and that Brian now sees why the man is called Patch. The reader does not yet know what else he has seen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description – Clothes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The author puts <em>one eye</em> in them, position in this sentence, as it is the most important thing. He carefully describes the eye patch, where it is, how it is held in place and its colour. Moloney ensures that readers have a clear picture of the eye patch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Author’s device alerts the reader to more expansions
Now the author prepares the reader for more of Patch’s attributes. The reader knows that Brian’s reactions to the man’s appearance are a little silly, as nothing he says or does is actually threatening. Brian jumps to conclusions based solely on the way Patch looks.

Brian’s reaction (physical)
Brian’s reactions are classic examples of someone who is suddenly very afraid; for example, stop dead in his tracks, feet seemed frozen to the grass and finally, later in the chapter, Brian’s throat was suddenly dry and his legs felt weak so he hurried across the road to his own house.

Description – Physical characteristics and clothes
The author picks out a few of Patch’s attributes to describe. His head …

his sweaty scalp …

his black t-shirt …

and his bulging biceps, which are implied by the tight t-shirt.

Brian’s reaction (mental)
By including Brian’s thoughts, the author lets readers know that those muscles impressed Brian enormously.

Description – Clothes
Now we are told a bit more about the t-shirt.

Description – Comparison
This is a humorous contrast between a ‘normal’ grandmother and a mythical one who is into mud-wrestling. Because Patch is wearing something Brian considers would be offensive to at least part of the population, he misjudges Patch’s personality. The t-shirt completes the picture for Brian.

The picture and caption help readers to visualise the t-shirt that spooks Brian.
Transformations – Passage two

Up until the tree is cut down, there was a glimmer of hope that it would prevent the men from moving the wrong house. The author recounts the tree being cut down in detail, letting the reader know that nothing will stop these house movers. Patch is described as capable and strong, so his later inability to work out what to do about having moved the wrong house is both a dramatic twist and contrary to expectations.

Goals of the transformations

Comprehension
This part of the story recounts the tree being chopped down. Brian had hoped that this obstacle would stop the men from moving the house, but it proves to be no problem for the big, strong Patch and his chainsaw. Once the tree is gone, and unless Brian can prevent it, the Hendersons’ house will go.

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
Joint reconstructed writing on this passage will prepare students for other writing exercises in which they can experiment with using James Moloney’s strategy for writing recounts and the reactions of observers. In passage two, the author has used similes and written as though the chainsaw has a life of its own.
Teaching focus

Observer’s reactions
The author sets the reader up to be amazed, just like Brian. Brian is reacting to what he is seeing.

First event
Here we are told what it is that amazes Brian. The author uses a simile to begin to build a picture of the nimble Patch.

Observer’s reactions
As Brian wonders how Patch is doing it, so does the reader. This is another of the author’s asides.

The author writes that Brian looks closely so that he can then describe what he sees in great detail.

Rather than using the correct name for these tools (cleats), the author uses Brian’s words. This allows the author not only to write from Brian’s point of view, but also to describe the cleats for readers who not familiar with them.

The author describes precisely how the cleats work.

Second event
The next event to surprise Brian is what Patch does when he reaches a branch. The word *dangled* shows how strong Patch is. A heavy chainsaw wouldn’t ‘dangle’ from most people; it would drag, or pull, or weigh them down.

Authors use metaphors to create images for the reader. Writing as if the chainsaw has a mind of its own, and even starts itself, shows how powerful and scary it is. While the word *rattling* is a mechanical sound, the word *roar* brings to mind lions.

Now the author races through the events, reflecting the speed with which the branches fall from the tree. Details are not included here. The reader can imagine what this looked like and how fast it happened.
Third event
Here the author slows down the action a little, and writes about Patch (he) cutting off the top half of the tree. Again, readers need to imagine this. The word *plunge* helps here, as it indicates a sudden and violent movement.

Fourth event
Again the author refers to Patch as *he*. The author has not stopped writing about Patch’s exploits, so he doesn’t need to use his name. There is no ambiguity about who is performing these actions. The word *shinnied* develops the idea that Patch is like a possum. He moves quickly rather than carefully and slowly because he is strong and experienced.

Fifth event
Once again it is the chainsaw that seems to have the drive to destroy this tree. Now it is *buzzing*, which is a quieter sound often associated with bees, but also with saws.

The author finishes by referring to that gum tree (the one he has been writing about). Readers will probably feel empathy for Brian, who is growing increasingly desperate about the problem.

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Spelling

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

How to choose spelling words

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

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

This text has been benchmarked at Level 3 or 4, so it could be assumed that most students studying it would be negotiating the transitional stage of spelling. Consequently, teachers should work on words that help students use visual strategies to notice larger chunks of letters that go together to make orthographic patterns.

Examples from passage one

Following are some suggestions for spelling, as well as words that end in the suffix -ed. Teachers will probably make other choices based on their spelling goals and the specific needs of the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-ion</th>
<th>-tion</th>
<th>-atch</th>
<th>-ead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>champ/ion</td>
<td>cap/tion</td>
<td>p/atch</td>
<td>d/ead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ack</td>
<td>-ight</td>
<td>-ought</td>
<td>-ee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tr/ack/s</td>
<td>t/ight</td>
<td>th/ought</td>
<td>t/ee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bl/ack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples from passage two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-atch</th>
<th>-ou</th>
<th>-ee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p/atch</td>
<td>m/outh</td>
<td>tr/ee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/atch/ed</td>
<td>e/n/ough (or en/ough)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gr/ound</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).

Examples from passage one

champion: 1225, from old French. Combatant in field (campus)
caption: 1384, headings from legal documents involving capture
patch: 1382, possibly from pieche of cloth
watched: 1585, from old English, waecce. The time a crew is on the deck of a boat.
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

Passage one
Reconstruct sentences, paragraphs and sections of text as appropriate.

● Reconstruct the first part of the section of text where Patch is described and Brian’s reactions are listed. Discuss the staging of the description and the inclusion of Brian’s reactions, including his thoughts.

● In another lesson, continue with the description, showing how fairly innocuous attributes (such as a sweaty head) are seen as fearful by Brian.

Passage two
Reconstruct sentences, paragraphs and sections of text as appropriate.

● Reconstruct the section in which Brian is amazed at how Patch is climbing the tree, then looks more closely and works out how he is doing it.

The author makes it very clear what Brian is observing by carefully describing the process.
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 *Moving House* would include:

- overall goals such as writing a description of a character, including another character’s reactions, which could stem from fear, elation or some other emotion.
- short-term goals such as jointly reconstructing parts of the story that contribute to the students’ understanding of its structure, and the significance of the author’s language choices.

Passage one

Workshop

- Read other stories with a similar theme to the class. Compare them with *Moving House*. Discuss the orientation, complication and resolution structure of each story. Discuss each author’s possible thinking during writing, as well as the importance of planning the complication and the resolution before beginning to write.
- Discuss possible passages the class could write. Choose a situation to write about as a group.
- Discuss and agree on the sequence of the passage.
- Have students work in groups to illustrate the sequence. (This could be done during art lessons.) Discuss what should be included, or not included, in each illustration.
- Begin to write. Do this as a joint activity, and relate what you say to the way James Moloney wrote the description of Patch in *Moving House*.

For example, Moloney starts by saying exactly when this all happened and then begins listing the character’s physical attributes. What do readers need to know about when this happened? Go on to list further attributes, then describe the other character’s reactions.

The writing does not have to closely follow that in *Moving House*. Rather, it could follow the author’s intention in including a description.
Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Character and attributes</th>
<th>Observer’s reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Just then</td>
<td>A little puppy; big brown eyes, droopy ears, skinny, Wanted to care for pup: feed it, cuddle it, give it a home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Later in the afternoon</td>
<td>A lady; stiff permed black hair, dark red lipstick and nails, grey suit</td>
<td>Afraid about getting told off, sweating and shaking, wanted to run away and hide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Just then a little puppy ran round the corner. Mavis’s heart skipped a beat. The puppy had big, brown shiny eyes, droopy ears and a skinny little body with bones sticking out. Mavis wanted to keep the pup for herself, cuddle it, take it home and give it a bowl of food. Look at the poor thing, thought Mavis.

2. Later in the afternoon a tall lady came into the room. Tom started sweating. She had a helmet of stiff, permed, black hair. Her lipstick and nails were painted a dark, dark red. She wore a plain grey suit. Tom felt afraid he would be told off for what he had done and began to shake. He wanted to run away and hide in the cupboard, but his legs wouldn’t move. I’m going to get into trouble, thought Tom.

Students could instead focus on the descriptive aspects of the passage studied. They could describe each other and conclude with a comment about clothing.

Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of appearance</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Comment about clothes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jimmy, 1.3 metres tall</td>
<td>jumper</td>
<td>needed washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Yuko, almost as tall as Josh</td>
<td>Trendy, colourful outfit</td>
<td>you would see it in a catalogue put in your letterbox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Jimmy was 1.3 metres tall and his jumper would need to see the inside of a washing machine before you could take him home to meet your parents.

2. Yuko was almost as tall as Josh and her outfit was as colourful and trendy as any you would see in a catalogue that had found its way into your letterbox, even though you had stuck a sign on it that said ‘No Junk Mail!’
Passage two

Passage two illustrates a recount structure often used in narrative writing. Passage two uses a recount structure for writing narratives. It chronicles the actions of an important character. The events emphasise how physically strong this character is. The author uses a simile to enhance the image. Machinery is described as if it has a mind of its own. There is also an observer, whose thoughts and reactions are shared with the reader. The recount concludes with the consequences of the actions. Workshop activities should be supported with discussions about the use of recounts. Writing simple recounts about everyday experiences should be used with restraint.

Workshop

- Find other examples of recounts within narratives and discuss their impact and structure.
- Discuss possible recounts that the class could write. Discuss a scenario in which a dramatic series of events would need to be recounted. Keep a record of suggestions.
- Start to write when everyone has agreed on a series of events.

Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Simile and Event 1</th>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Event 2</th>
<th>Event 3</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A man mowing an overgrown lawn</td>
<td>Mowed a square of grass first, as if the mower were a sheep</td>
<td>Astonished at how quickly the jungle was disappearing</td>
<td>Kept going round the square, each line getting closer to the middle</td>
<td>Began to rake all the cut grass and weeds quickly</td>
<td>Smooth green lawn and a compost heap started on the other side of the fence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A potter making a pot on a potter’s wheel</td>
<td>Built up the lump of brown clay as if it were a living thing in her hands</td>
<td>Full of admiration as the clay became a recognisable and beautiful object</td>
<td>It grew taller and taller. It grew smooth and symmetrical</td>
<td>A spout was formed, then a handle was attached as the wheel stopped turning</td>
<td>An elegant brown jug stood on the bench where what looked like a lump of mud had sat before</td>
</tr>
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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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class: Year 4</th>
<th>Week: 1</th>
<th>Term: 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text:</strong> Moving House by James Moloney</td>
<td><strong>Teaching focus:</strong> How authors construct characters</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strategy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Monday</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tuesday</strong></th>
<th><strong>Wednesday</strong></th>
<th><strong>Thursday</strong></th>
<th><strong>Friday</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High order literate orientation</strong></td>
<td>How to introduce a powerful character from the point of view of a less powerful participant. Brian's first contact with Patch (a man of immense size). At that moment, the door opened and a man stepped out. He was nearly two metres tall.</td>
<td>Review of Brian’s first contact with Patch and foreshadowing of something even more riveting: What could be more track-stopping than someone two metres tall? But that was not what made Brian stop dead in his tracks.</td>
<td>Review first contact and foreshadowing of the track-stopping feature: Physical description of someone who would stop any child in his or her tracks. In that first second, Brian knew exactly why the man was called Patch. Over one eye, held in place by a narrow string was a black eye patch. That was just the start.</td>
<td>Review first contact, foreshadowing and description, then go on to Brian’s reaction to this sight (note that ‘the man’ is now ‘the giant’). Brian’s feet seemed frozen to the grass as he watched this giant come closer.</td>
<td>Review previous lessons, then the next part of the description of Patch (note that he is not so intimidating now). The man’s head was bald and, since it was a hot day, the sweat shone on his scalp. Review past lessons. Focus on description of Patch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformations</strong></td>
<td>How did the author stage the description of Patch? At that moment, the door opened and a man stepped out</td>
<td>Discuss why the author describes Patch’s height first. He was/nearly two metres tall.</td>
<td>Focus on author’s technique: foreshadowing and suspense. But that was not what made Brian stop dead in his tracks.</td>
<td>Focus on suspense created by drawing out the description. In that first second, Brian knew exactly why the man was called Patch.</td>
<td>Discuss author’s language choice: Why choose to start the description with the eye patch? Over one eye, held in place by a narrow string, was a black eye patch.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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At that moment, the door opened and a man stepped out.

He was nearly two metres tall.

But that was not what made Brian stop dead in his tracks.

In that first second, Brian knew exactly why the man was called Patch.

Over one eye, held in place by a narrow string, was a black eye patch.

That was just the start.

Brian’s feet seemed frozen to the grass as he watched this giant come closer.

The man’s head was bald.
and, since it was a hot day,
the sweat shone on his scalp.

His t-shirt was black like the eye patch
and tight around the arms.

Look at those muscles, thought Brian.

There was a picture on the chest of his t-shirt, too.

It was not the kind of picture
you would show your grandmother.

Not unless she was into mud-wrestling.

In fact, not unless she was a champion mud-wrestler.

The caption under this picture said ‘Hard as Nails’.
While he watched, mouth open in amazement,
Patch began to climb the tree like a possum.
How did he do it?
The boy looked more closely
and, sure enough, he saw
what was happening.
Patch had special spikes
strapped to the insides of his ankles.
Each time he climbed a little higher,
he dug the spikes into the bark of the tree.
When he reached the first branch,
he pulled up the chainsaw
that dangled from a rope at his waist.
The motor began its rattling roar
and down came the first branch,
then another and another until the tree was bare.
Then he cut off the top half of the trunk
and let it plunge to the ground.
Quickly, he shinnied down the tree and onto the grass.
Once he was there,
the chainsaw buzzed again
and all that was left of that gum tree
was a stump low enough to sit on.
These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 4. However, they could also be used with older students who have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

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

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

Notes

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