Secondary

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 7. However, they could also be used in Year 8 where students have difficulties with reading. In this story Paul Jennings deals with the death of a parent, so the story may not be appropriate for younger students.

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.
# Contents

Using this resource .................................................................................................................. 1

**Nails** ........................................................................................................................................ 3
  Synopsis of the story .................................................................................................................. 4
  Themes ....................................................................................................................................... 4
  Why use this story? ..................................................................................................................... 4
  Structure of the text .................................................................................................................... 6
  Language features of the text ..................................................................................................... 6

**Accelerated Literacy teaching** ............................................................................................... 9
  Teaching the sequence ............................................................................................................... 10

**In the classroom** .................................................................................................................... 11
  Literate orientation .................................................................................................................... 12
  Transformations .......................................................................................................................... 30
  Spelling ..................................................................................................................................... 39
  Writing ....................................................................................................................................... 42

**Appendices** ............................................................................................................................ 49
  Sample weekly plan ................................................................................................................... 50

**Photocopiable masters** .......................................................................................................... 53
  Study passage one ...................................................................................................................... 54
  Study passage two .................................................................................................................... 57
Using this resource
Year level

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 7. However, they could also be used in Year 8 where students have difficulties with reading. In this story Paul Jennings deals with the death of a parent, so the story may not be appropriate for younger students.

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 text

‘Nails’ is from Unbearable! by Paul Jennings. Published 1990 by Penguin Group (Australia). Page numbers provided here refer to this edition.
hump-backed and bow-legged, with a fro
and razor-sharp teeth. But
like all other things, not ver
remely bad to the eye, he like to

Nails
Synopsis of the story

‘Nails’ begins dramatically with the main character, Lehman, preparing to bury his father. The two have lived an isolated, lonely life on an island. His father would leave him alone each morning and go to the beach, and would not tell Lehman what he was doing. One day Lehman follows, desperate to discover his father’s secret and to show him the extra sets of fingernails and toenails he is growing. His father insists he is looking for the answer, and as a sultry storm brews, the suspense also builds as the fingernails continue to grow up his arms to his elbows and the toenails, up to his knees. The story reaches a climax with the death of Lehman’s father, while it appears that what is happening to Lehman’s body will not be resolved. The discovery that his mother was a mermaid and the nails are really growing scales is a fitting conclusion.

This story is unusual for Paul Jennings, as it is not light-hearted. However, in other ways it is typical of Jennings’s style, in that elements of myth and fantasy and suspense and emotion are woven into it. Jennings also likes to depict strong relationships between parents and children, such as that between Lehman and his father.

Themes

‘Nails’ explores the themes of:

- loneliness and isolation
- the strength and complexity of parent–child relationships
- the transition from boyhood to manhood
- how endings can lead to new beginnings.

Why use this story?

In this story Paul Jennings:

- writes about the emotions of loneliness, anger, despair and joy, with which young people will identify
- elaborates on internal mental processes
- uses weather to build atmosphere
- uses personification to describe the sea
- builds suspense in various ways
- carefully selects verbs to help build images
- uses similes
- foreshadows what is to come.
This story could be used to reinforce how an author builds suspense, in association with ‘A Good Tip for Ghosts’ from Jennings’s Uncanny! or ‘Spooks Incorporated’ from Quirky Tales! Because ‘Nails’ is one of the stories reworked for the television series Round the Twist, interesting class discussions should evolve from reading the text and viewing the video, relating to why the author and producer have made certain changes to the television version of the story.

There are several passages in this text that will support students to use effective literary techniques. These are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1, paragraph 3, from Lehman was rich to bobbed and rocked.</td>
<td>To learn how to elaborate on an attribute by adding several examples; in this case, elaborating on how Lehman was rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1, paragraph 6, from Lehman knew that he had to do something to Or soggy?</td>
<td>To learn how to elaborate on a character’s thoughts to show internal turmoil and indecision. To use rhetorical questions to introduce doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5, paragraph 3, from part way through the sentence beginning Lehman’s feet touched the bottom to paragraph 6 His heart beat less loudly.</td>
<td>To teach about building suspense and including a character’s reactions to influence the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6, paragraph 5, The wind rattled the windows … Chapter 7, Several references to weather</td>
<td>To learn how to build intensity in weather to create atmosphere and affect the reader’s emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8, last paragraph, The wave took no notice …</td>
<td>To learn how to use metaphor to give human attributes to a natural phenomenon (personification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9, last paragraph, Lehman knew that his father was dead.</td>
<td>To learn how to describe a powerful event, in this case the death of a father, and the character’s reactions to that event. Simile is used to support the description.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of the text

Orientation: An unusual and emotionally laden event captures readers’ interest (his father dead in a chair). The story then moves back in time to explain why Lehman is in such a dreadful situation.

Complication 1: Lehman starts to grow nails and feels isolated and neglected by his father

Complication 2: (subplot) Lehman’s father is obsessed with looking for something on the island. Lehman sees something in a cave. His father goes to look and is washed out to sea. Lehman struggles to save his father, but is unsuccessful.

Resolution: Lehman buries his father, has the strength and purpose to try to discover what his father was searching for, discovers that his mother was a mermaid and finds happiness with his ‘ocean’ family.

Language features of the text

- The story is narrated by a third person describing the thoughts and motivations of the main character, Lehman. Paul Jennings builds a sense of loneliness and isolation around the main character, who is often left alone. He adds the dramatic effects of panic and desperation as Lehman’s nails grow rapidly over his body. In strong contrast are Lehman’s feelings of happiness and relief when he discovers that his nails are ‘scales, not nails’, and he meets the mer-family and disappears into the sea. The reader, though, must wait until the very end of the story for such relief – in between, the weather
changes and a brewing storm act as similes for Lehman’s desperation to find out what is wrong with him and his father’s attempts to solve the mystery.

- Paul Jennings focuses on the thoughts and emotions of Lehman, for whom we are sympathetic, and leaves out descriptions of the father’s thoughts and feelings. The reader sees the external signs of an increasingly desperate and obsessed man who does not deal well with his son’s panic at the nail growth, but we don’t see inside the father’s head.

- Paul Jennings uses descriptions of the weather to build atmosphere. He starts with weather that is calm and peaceful as Lehman prepares to bury his father. However, this sense of calm is shattered as we go back in time to learn what has happened to Lehman and his father. The sea becomes frenzied and a fierce storm blows up as the climax of the story is reached and Lehman’s father dies. It returns to its peaceful state as Lehman discovers his mer-family and dives into the sea with them.

- The author demonstrates how to build suspense by alluding to a scary creature (Staring, Watching, Hiding,) and interspersing this introduction of an unknown character with descriptions of Lehman’s increasingly fearful and desperate behaviour and thinking. The descriptions of the scary thing in the cave are at first vague and hidden, and become clearer as the suspense grows.

- Paul Jennings carefully chooses verbs that help to build an image of the action in our heads.

- Jennings uses similes to help us identify with Lehman’s emotions and thoughts and to create clear images.

- The author foreshadows the resolution with little clues throughout the story, particularly the emerging nails and mentions of the boy’s mother. Literal readers may miss these inferences, which add to enjoyment of the story.
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](http://www.nalp.edu.au).
In the classroom
The teaching sequence on ‘Nails’ aims to teach:

- how to read the story at 90 per cent accuracy or above
- how to discuss the story, including the meaning and inferences contained in the author’s language choices
- how to spell fluently and write clearly the words taught as part of the teaching sequence
- how to write, with appropriate teacher support, a short narrative that begins with a description of a dramatic event.

**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**

The first objective of low order orientation on ‘Nails’ would be to read the whole story to the class in stages, with an orientation to each chapter before reading it. Then discuss each chapter to make sure students understand the inferences.

**Teaching focus**

- Introduce Paul Jennings as an author.
- Talk about his modern-day fantasy stories.
- Talk about his endings, which always have a ‘twist’: that is, they are unexpected and quirky.
- Provide an overview of the story, but leave out the ending until you have read the whole story.
- Discuss why students are studying this story (what techniques Paul Jennings uses that students can experiment with in their own writing: just mention some here, you can talk about them in detail later).
Teaching focus

- The story starts with a confronting scene: Lehman is about to bury his father. At first Paul Jennings doesn’t tell us that Lehman’s father is dead. He just hints at it.
- Paul Jennings also stresses in this chapter just how alone Lehman feels.
- After you read Lehman started to scratch nervously … , point out that this is the first hint that there is a problem with his nails.

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

Inferences

What do we learn about Lehman?
We learn that his father is dead, and that he is totally alone on the island. We learn that he is now rich, that the island belongs to him, but all that he really wants is his father back. We learn there has been a storm and that his boat and radio are gone, so there is no way to get help. We also know that he is the only one who can bury his father, and that will be a very difficult thing for a young boy to do, both physically and emotionally. We gather that Lehman knows what he has to do, but he can’t quite bring himself to do it.

What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?
We don’t learn a lot just yet. We only know that his nails are growing rapidly, and that he has to scratch them. This is the first hint of a problem.

What do we learn about Lehman’s parents?
At the beginning of the chapter we learn that Lehman’s father is not responding to Lehman. Paul Jennings leaves us guessing about the reason for this. The father can’t see or move, which suggests that he might be dead, but we don’t know for sure. Later we are told that he is dead. The last sentence tells us that there are only the two of them on the island, so if there is a mother, she is not there with them.

What do we learn about the setting for the story?
We learn that Lehman and his father are on an island, and it sounds pretty special: there is a house, a golden beach, a high hill, palms, and a little jetty, and there used to be a boat bobbing and rocking.

Teaching focus

- Remind students that the story began in Chapter 1 as Lehman was about to bury his father. In the last sentence of that chapter, Paul Jennings takes us back, through Lehman’s remembering, to when they arrived at the island.
- Chapter 2 tells us that Lehman’s father has lived there before. This is an important detail, but we don’t find out why until later in the story.
Chapter 2 also introduces the puzzle about Lehman’s father. Every day he goes to the beach to look for something, but we don’t know what. We find out how Lehman feels about it, though: he is curious, and his father won’t let him into the secret. The fact that Lehman is left out of the secret also emphasises his loneliness and isolation.

We also learn more about Lehman’s itchy fingers. Even though his father says the problem is eczema, there is a hint of doubt, as he didn’t look too sure. We are told he looks at Lehman’s fingers, then stamps out of the hut. Here is the first hint that those itchy fingers are not a simple problem.

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

**Inferences**

**What do we learn about Lehman?**
We are reminded that Lehman is lonely, and every morning he has to do his schoolwork by himself.

We learn that instead of his father helping Lehman with his schoolwork, he leaves the boy to go and look for something. Lehman feels lonely and left out because his father won’t tell him what he is looking for.

**What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?**
We learn that Lehman’s fingers and toes are increasingly itchy, and that there are red lumps growing behind his fingernails. His father doesn’t like him scratching, and tells him that it is eczema that will go when the wind changes.

**What do we learn about Lehman’s father?**
We learn that Lehman’s father disappears every morning by himself, looking for something. Whatever he finds, he stores in an old sea chest that is locked so Lehman can’t see inside.

**Teaching focus**

- This chapter introduces Lehman’s mother by way of a photograph. Paul Jennings describes her, and how Lehman feels about her, including how much he misses her. Emphasise the sentence In her hair she wore a golden clip set with pearls. Here is another clue about the solution to this mystery. Paul Jennings did not write that just because he wants her to appear beautiful. Why would he put pearls in her hair?

- Lehman’s frustration is growing and he pleads with his father to be allowed to accompany him to the beach.

- The eczema gets even worse, and now it’s not just his fingers but his toes as well.

- A dream of dark places is included: here are some more clues about the solution. Ask students why Paul Jennings would include this dream information.

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

What do we learn about Lehman?
We learn more about how lonely Lehman feel and how much he misses his mother. He takes the photo of his mother everywhere he goes. Paul Jennings also tells us about Lehman’s dream, how itchy he is and how unsettled at night. We are reminded of Lehman’s frustration with his father’s secret search.

What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?
Lehman’s fingers and toes are itching so much that he scratches them until they hurt. Then an extra row of nails appears on his hands and feet, slightly overlapping the first ones. Lehman is now in a major panic.

What do we learn about Lehman’s parents?
We learn that Lehman’s mother has been gone for so long that he can hardly remember her. We know she has a lovely sad face, but we don’t know why it is sad. We don’t know whether she has died or gone away somewhere. Paul Jennings gives us a little clue about her hair: she wore a golden clip set with pearls.
We learn that despite Lehman really wanting to know what is going on, his father won’t tell him. He just wants Lehman to trust him.

What do we learn about the setting for the story?
We learn that Lehman and his father have a vegetable garden and that they grow potatoes.

Teaching focus
● The suspense continues when Lehman decides to find his father down at the cove, where Lehman has been forbidden to go. (You may need to explain what a cove is.)
● When Lehman eventually finds his father and his father sees the nails, we are drawn into wondering if they have something to do with his father’s search. His father’s anger melts and he agrees to tell Lehman what the mystery is when they get back to the house.
● Jennings uses the technique of finishing the chapter without telling us what the nails and the search are about. We just have to read on.

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

Inferences

What do we learn about Lehman?
Lehman is feeling frightened and angry. He disobeys his father’s rule about going to the cove on his own. We know that he mostly takes notice of his father, so this action emphasises his fear at this point.
What do we learn about Lehman's nails?
We learn that Lehman’s father does know something about why the nails are growing and is ready to tell Lehman when they get back to the house.

What do we learn about Lehman’s father?
Lehman’s father has gone quite a long way around the cove and is digging for something in the pebbles. When he sees Lehman in the cove, he sees a dripping figure and his face lights up into a radiant smile. However, when he realises it is Lehman, he becomes very angry. This suggests that whatever he is looking for might be a person; in fact, a wet person.
A lot of what we have learnt about Lehman’s father up to this point has not been very positive: he leaves Lehman on his own, he won’t let Lehman go with him on his searches and he won’t tell Lehman what he is looking for. This chapter shows us that he really does care about Lehman. When he sees the nails, his anger melts and he realises it is time to tell Lehman everything.

What do we learn about the setting for the story?
We learn quite a lot about the island in this chapter, and it’s important information for the climax later on in the story. We know that there is a steep path down to the cove, and that the cove is dangerous and out of bounds. The path finishes on the beach and Lehman has to run along the beach to his right. A group of large rocks blocks his way and he has to wade through the water to get to the other side. Even now, in calm weather, the water comes up to his armpits and, at the deepest point, to his chin, so it isn’t easy. When he comes to the point furthest out, he has to swim until he finally splashes into another small cove, which he hadn’t seen before.

Teaching focus
First of all Lehman discovers what appears to be a man in a cave on his way back to the house; he gets a horrible fright. Lehman’s stumbling flight along the beach back to the house tricks the reader into thinking that he will be safe and that the problem is about to be solved. (This passage will be used later for high order literature orientation.) However, Lehman’s nails now look like two gloves of armour and his feet and ankles are covered too. He faints with the shock.

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

Inferences
What do we learn about Lehman?
Lehman has had enough. He feels angry and frustrated, but still his father won’t tell him anything. When Lehman sees something moving in the cave on his way back to the beach, it only increases his panic. He thinks he is alone on the island with his father, and now he has seen a man’s face.
What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?
The nails are growing so fast now that Lehman is totally overwhelmed and faints in shock.

What do we learn about the setting for the story?
We have already been introduced to the cove and beach in the previous chapter. In this chapter Lehman notices a deep, dark cave in the rocks on his way back to the beach; this is somewhere something scary could hide.

Teaching focus
- The chapter begins with another reference to the photograph of Lehman’s mother. The fading smile and dull pearls seem to suggest that there is something wrong.
- We think we are about to find out about the nails as Lehman and his father start to talk about the problem. The suspense is supported by the beginnings of a storm.
- Paul Jennings also uses words that soften the image of Lehman’s father at this point in the story as he is described as gently touching Lehman’s shoulder, stroking the nails and talking kindly to him.

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

Inferences

What do we learn about Lehman?
When Lehman regains consciousness (after fainting at the end of the previous chapter), the first thing he sees is his mother’s photograph and it reminds him that he doesn’t know what happened to her. He demands that his father tell him about his mother, why they have come back to the island and why his father is down at the beach all the time. He is also desperate about the nails growing all over him. He knows that his father has the answers, and he wants them.

What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?
Lehman now has nails up his arms to his elbows. The nails are erupting, row by row, as they watch. It is scary, but not painful. Lehman’s father tells him that he doesn’t think they will grow on his face.

What do we learn about Lehman’s parents?
Lehman’s father does come back, as promised, to tell Lehman everything. Lehman’s father is very reassuring about the nails. He tells Lehman he can’t be sure he can solve the mystery, but is on the island to try to do so.

What do we learn about the setting for the story?
Paul Jennings is leading us towards the climax of the story and, to help build suspense, a storm begins to brew. Instead of the boat bobbing and rocking as in the first chapter, the boat now tugged and pulled at the ropes. The wind rattled the windows and shook the bungalow, and we are told that Lehman’s father has to raise his voice above the noise of the wind.
Teaching focus

- Lehman tells his father about the man he saw in the cave. His father’s response is shrill and urgent. He tells Lehman this is what he has been waiting for.
- The weather worsens; the nails are growing like an ivory chain around his neck, as Lehman stares his father straight in the eye and demands to know what is happening to his body. Instead of letting Lehman (and us) in on the secret, Lehman’s father runs off down to the sea, telling his son to ‘Wait here. Wait here. Everything will be alright’.
- Paul Jennings gives us a few clues during this chapter of what might be the link between Lehman’s ‘nails’ and When we were here before. But we are still left wondering as Lehman’s father runs out the door.

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

Inferences

**What do we learn about Lehman?**
Despite his frustration and fear, Lehman is still determined to get some answers. We get the sense that he will follow his father even though he is told not to do so because it’s too dangerous.

**What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?**
The nails are now around Lehman’s neck.

**What do we learn about Lehman’s father?**
Lehman’s father abruptly changes mood, from being kind and gentle in Chapter 6 to being startled at the mention of the man in the cave. He ends the conversation in which he was going to tell Lehman (and us) what is going on and rushes out.

**What do we learn about the setting for the story?**
The storm dominates the chapter as we head towards the climax of the story. There are many descriptions of the wind and the storm to match our emotions: the wind whipped at (the waves), a terrible gust of wind shook the bungalow, a blast of wind broke into the hut like a violent burglar.

Teaching focus

- The situation gets worse with Lehman’s father disappearing to look for the man in the cave. Lehman couldn’t see him but he knew he was somewhere ahead.
- The storm rises, and the sea changes character. The calm water Lehman had earlier waded through past the cave has now turned into raging surf.
- Lehman is really worried for his father, who insists on getting to the cave. Lehman first wishes him forward then, seeing the huge wave, wishes him to stop.
The chapter finishes with Lehman’s father being knocked from his feet and the water burying him in its angry foam. We are left not knowing what will happen to him.

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

Inferences

**What do we learn about Lehman?**
Lehman goes after his father to the beach, dressed in nothing but shorts. He is very frightened, but also totally focused on his father. He tries to stop his father from going out into the water past the cave. He is helpless as a wave knocks his father off his feet.

**What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?**
Other things are more important than the nails in this chapter. Lehman doesn’t have time to notice them growing.

**What do we learn about Lehman’s father?**
Lehman’s father is desperate to find the man in the cave. He doesn’t care about how dangerous it is. This is his last chance.

**What do we learn about the setting for the story?**
The setting has changed a lot since it was first described as calm and peaceful. During the storm, the rocks are nearly covered and cut off by the surf. There is no way you could walk out around the point now.

Paul Jennings uses personification to turn the waves and wind into attackers, as though they are people: the waves are *furious*, the wind *screamed and howled* and *raged*, the sea *sucked* back each wave. The wave that knocks over Lehman’s father took *no notice*. It raced hungrily up the beach.

Teaching focus

- The climax of the story is reached in this chapter. Our emotions are rocked as we imagine that Lehman’s father will be alright, then realise he is not.
- The sea becomes the aggressor and Lehman’s father is described as a *tiny, helpless cork rushing forward towards the waiting cliff*.
- Lehman rescues his father, which raises our hopes before we discover that his father has been badly injured.
- Lehman manages to get his father back to the house, which *took all his strength*, but his father dies. We are given a detailed description of Lehman’s reaction to his father’s death. He cries, a *warrior in a coat of mail*, reinforcing the notion that the sea has been the enemy.

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

What do we learn about Lehman?
Lehman has inner strength, which comes to the fore when he sees his helpless father.
He risks his own life to save him. He gets to his father and pulls him to safety just in time. With amazing physical strength, Lehman then manages to drag his father all the way up to the house.
Lehman’s reaction to his father’s death tells us just how much he loved him.
Paul Jennings likens Lehman to a knight, or warrior, who has fought the sea to save his father.

What do we learn about Lehman’s father?
Lehman’s father is described in this chapter as a helpless bundle, his arms flayed, or flapping about in an uncontrolled way. He is a tiny, helpless cork.
He is totally dependent on Lehman for rescue. The tennis ball-sized lump on his head tells us that he is in trouble.
When Lehman gets him to the house, he stares out of the window with glazed eyes. This tells us that he isn’t really very conscious and probably has concussion. His arm is shaking, so he is probably in shock.
Paul Jennings doesn’t tell us outright that he dies. He says he drew a deep breath, shuddered and was still.

What do we learn about the setting for the story?
At beginning of the chapter, the weather was wild. The sea flung the father onto the rocks, and left him there. The wave is going to run up the cliff and kill itself on the rocks. It sucked and pulled at their legs.
When the worst is over, and Lehman gets his father back to the house, the weather subsides: the wind dropped and the storm grew still.

Teaching focus
• This chapter stands in strong contrast to the violent action of the previous chapter. It begins with two paragraphs describing Lehman’s thoughts as he tries to decide what to do.
• There is the symbolic closing of the father’s eyes, which is likened to the closing of a book at the end of the story.
• Lehman can delay the burial no longer. Paul Jennings describes how respectfully and lovingly he prepares his father for burial, carefully selecting the site, digging a shallow trench that won’t jar his father’s bones and placing newspaper over his face.
• Finally his father is buried and Lehman has to move on. We are given an image of Lehman’s appearance now, lizard man, which gives us another clue about what Lehman is about to become.
At this point, to hypothesise about how the story might end, you could recall all the other clues we have been given (e.g. the mystery about Lehman’s mother – only her face is in the photograph and she has pearls in her hair; the nails; the father’s reaction to the nails).

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

Inferences

What do we learn about Lehman?
Lehman sits all night and all morning. People who are grieving often do that. They need to get used to the idea that someone has died. Lehman also has to work out what to do next. He feels very mixed up: he wants help, but he doesn’t want anyone to see him covered in nails. He knows he has to bury his father, but he is worried about what it will feel like. (Remind students about his worrying back in Chapter 1.)

When he does finally close his father’s eyes, it isn’t as bad as he thinks. He likens it to closing a book at the end of a story. He imagines his dad’s life as a story that he will never forget; the waves will beat on the shore forever, and that is how long he will remember his father.

Then Lehman gets practical because he has to seriously think about what he is going to do. We learn how thoughtful Lehman is about burying his father: He chooses a spot overlooking the sea, he digs a hole that isn’t too deep so he won’t jar his father when he puts him in and, finally, he puts some newspaper over his face so the sand won’t get all over it. All of these things tell us how kind and loving Lehman is, and what a strong relationship he shared with his father. Finally, he puts the shovel into the ground instead of a gravestone. The shovel symbolises his father’s ongoing search for ... we still don’t know what.

The chapter finishes with Lehman feeling utterly alone.

What do we learn about Lehman’s nails?
Lehman now has so many nails that Paul Jennings describes him as a tall lizard man. There are now thousands of nails all over him and the setting sun is glinting on them.

Teaching focus

- In this chapter there is still one problem to face: the man in the cave. Lehman has already shown his strength of character in the way he has buried his father. Now he becomes the warrior again, this time fighting not the sea but the unknown man in the cave.
- He goes down to the beach with his spear. The sea is now still and blue again, and the air warm. In this part of the story, this is reassuring. Paul Jennings uses the calm sea to keep us calm.
- Lehman hears some breathing, but this time the suspense doesn’t continue very long. He is able to yell, although with a cracked voice, but then loses his courage and backs away.
Paul Jennings uses the familiar technique of finishing the chapter before the problem is resolved to maintain suspense.

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

**Inferences**

**What do we learn about Lehman?**
In this chapter, Lehman faces his fears. When his father is alive he is fairly obedient, doing what his father tells him, but now he has to act and make decisions for himself.
He gathers all his courage to go down to the beach, even though he is terrified. But when he gets to the cave and hears breathing, his courage fails him and he retreats. He is too frightened to turn around, so he walks backwards so he can see who or what comes out of the cave.

**What do we learn about the person in the cave?**
Paul Jennings keeps the suspense going. All we learn is that there are steady breathing noises, something moving, and a slippery, rustling noise. What would be making such noises?

**What do we learn about the setting for the story?**
The weather and the setting have changed completely. It is now calm. Night is approaching and darkness is often when scary things happen.
When Lehman goes down to the beach, the contrast with the previous storm is strong: the sea *lapped gently* on the sandy beach. It is *still and blue*. The tide is out and Lehman can walk out to the cave where his father had to swim the previous day.

**Teaching focus**

- Lehman (and the reader) finds out that he isn’t the only ‘lizard person’ around. He sees three others.
- Paul Jennings describes these people in some detail. We find out that they are friendly, and are given clues about them being wet. Their laugh sounds like bubbles coming from the water.
- Then we are given further clues including a fish tail, golden hair and a tail covered in nails. These people are mermaids. (If students don’t know about mermaids, you will need to explain that they are mythical creatures, half-person, half-fish, who can live and breathe both in and out of water.)
- Finally, the answer to Lehman’s problem comes out of Lehman’s mouth: ‘*not nails,*’ he said, *but scales*. He is beginning to realise that he is somehow related to these creatures.
- Then there is another clue about the mermaid. Here is the clip with pearls that he saw in the photo of his mother every day. And in case we haven’t worked it out, Paul Jennings now tells us *while his father had been a man, his mother was a mermaid.*
So Lehman has moved in a short space of time from being one of a kind, a freak covered in nails and the only person left on the island, to finding his mother and a whole new family.

Now we see Lehman’s metamorphosis into a merman. We are told *His head was filled with lightness and happiness* as he moves under the sea, following his mother.

All his problems are solved: he has a family, he knows why he has nails, and his unhappiness about the mystery disappears. Paul Jennings makes sure Lehman’s father is not forgotten with one return by the fish-boy to farewell the burial place on the hill.

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

**Inferences**

**What do we learn about Lehman?**

All Lehman’s questions are answered in this final chapter. We find out why Lehman has nails: they are not nails, but scales. We find out who Lehman’s mother is: she is a mermaid, which is why Lehman is covered in scales. We recognise the pearl clip in his mother’s hair from the photograph. We recognise the laughing men and the giggling child from Lehman’s dream in Chapter 3. We work out why Lehman’s father would have been excited to see a dripping figure come into the cove in Chapter 4. We find out why Lehman’s father brought him to the island: because a fish-boy could only be happy in one place – the ocean. Lehman’s emotions change completely. He goes from anger, despair and utter loneliness to being filled with lightness and happiness. Lehman doesn’t forget his father, even with the excitement of having a new family. He plunges out of the water like a dolphin to look for his father’s shovel at the head of the grave and say goodbye.

**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 five chapters, return to study passage one (pages 75–6) 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.

High order literate orientation – Passage one

In this passage, Paul Jennings shows how writers keep their readers in suspense. He carefully builds our knowledge about the scary thing inside the cave and provides many examples of Lehman’s reactions, mostly physical, that let readers know just how scared he is. The tension is eased at the end of the passage.

Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character moves to a scary location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… he walked through the water …</td>
<td>Lehman wasn’t worried as he moved through the water back towards the beach. He only walked, he didn’t run. Walking through the water indicates some difficulty; it’s a challenge. (When Lehman faces the scary thing later on, the tide is out and he can walk up to the cave on the sand.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… past a deep, black cave in the rocks.</td>
<td>When Lehman walked out to his father, he didn’t notice the cave, but there has to be somewhere for the scary thing to hide. Paul Jennings has chosen a cave because there are often small caves in rocks at the beach. This isn’t just any cave; it is a deep, black cave in which someone could easily hide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scary thing introduced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something moved inside.</td>
<td>Paul Jennings doesn’t simply say ‘there was a man inside’. That would spoil the suspense. He wants us to become more and more scared as Lehman works out what is in the cave. So the first time we meet the thing in the cave, we just know that it is something and that it can move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character’s reaction to scary thing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The world froze.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The world didn’t really freeze: rather, this metaphor is a way of saying that Lehman was so frightened that he didn’t notice anything else going on around him. The sea and birds and wind might as well not have been there. Lehman can focus only on this one frightening thing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lehman could hear the blood pumping in his head.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You might also have experienced this kind of fear, when everything seems still and your heart is pumping fast: it feels as though the blood is roaring through your ears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A shiver spread over his skin like a wave.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is another physical reaction that tells us just how scared Lehman is. He shivered throughout his entire body. Jennings uses a simile to help us understand how it moved: like a wave, rolling from one end of his body to another.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>He choked off a cry.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here is the last reaction in this section. Lehman was so frightened that his first reaction was to cry out, but he choked it off, swallowed the noise, so he could not be heard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Another feature of the scary thing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two dark eyes stared out at him.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are given another clue about what was in the cave. If this thing has eyes, it must be an animal, but in the darkness it’s hard to tell exactly what kind. The eyes are staring, meaning they are looking long and hard, so whatever this creature is, it’s not afraid. It is giving Lehman a long, hard look. This doesn’t necessarily mean it is nasty or mean. If Jennings had wanted us to think that, he might have used the word ‘glared’, or ‘glowered’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character’s reactions intensify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>He turned and thrashed through the water.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehman didn’t want to stay another minute. He had been facing the cave, but he didn’t want to look at those eyes, so he turned. This time he didn’t walk, he thrashed. In other words, he plunged wildly and violently through the water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lehman wasn’t really in control of his movements. He was getting out of there as fast as he could. So, as he was thrashing through the water, he was doing other things at the same time. He was sort of swimming, sort of running, then falling into the water. He didn’t just fall quietly into the water; he splashed in panic.

### He fell and sank under the surface.

Even though the water was not very deep, he was so panicked that he sank under the surface.

### When he came up he snatched a frightened glance back at the space between the rocks.

Lehman managed to get up, but you can imagine that he was worried about what had happened while he was under the water. So he looked back towards the cave. But Paul Jennings chooses a very descriptive way of saying this. He took a very quick look, he snatched a glance and, because he was scared, it was a frightened glance. Jennings could have just said he snatched a frightened glance back at the cave, because that’s what he means; but instead he refers to the cave in another way, calling it the space between the rocks. Sometimes authors do this so they don’t repeat the same words too often.

### Additional information about the scary thing

When Lehman snatched a glance, he saw something. But Jennings doesn’t say saw, he uses other descriptive words. It was a quick look, so Lehman caught a glimpse. This tells us that, although he didn’t see very much, he saw enough to know what it was: a man’s face. And the man was doing three things that would make Lehman even more scared: he was staring (as Jennings mentioned before), he was watching (so he was looking at Lehman carefully) and he was hiding. So he wasn’t coming out of the cave to show himself. He didn’t want to be seen.

### Character moves to a safe location

Lehman had to get away from the scary face. He was terrified, so he ran too fast and stumbled.

Lehman was so afraid he didn’t have the courage to look behind him and perhaps see the scary man chasing him.
He didn’t stop until he reached the bungalow. Lehman was running towards a place he felt was safe. The bungalow. He didn’t stop running until he got back to his home.

He rushed inside. He didn’t look behind him, but just hurried inside.

**Description of safe location**

*The thin walls and open windows offered no protection.* Although we are told he now felt a little better, the description of the bungalow is designed to make us feel uneasy.

**End of suspense**

*But he felt better.* *But* tells us that even though Lehman was not actually much safer in the bungalow than out in the open, he felt safer there and, accordingly, his physical reactions calmed down.

*His breath slowed.* His began to breathe more comfortably.

*His heart beat less loudly.* His beating heart, which had been pumping loudly in his head in the cave, was now also quieter.

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

This passage (page 84) is emotionally powerful. A significant event has occurred and Paul Jennings describes the impact of this event on the main character. Jennings does this by describing Lehman’s physical reaction. He then uses a simile to build an image of Lehman that demonstrates his grief but also positions him not as a boy, but as a warrior who has fought the angry sea.

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>A statement about a significant event</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehman knew that his father was dead.</td>
<td>The word <em>knew</em> tells us there is no doubt that Lehman’s father has died. When we first learn that the father is dead in Chapter 1, Jennings suggests more than states this by saying that the father did not see or move. But here we know for sure. He doesn’t say ‘thought’ or ‘suspected’, which would leave an element of doubt. Likewise, here Jennings does not use softer words for ‘dead’. He could have said ‘had passed away’ or ‘was gone forever’ or ‘was no more’, but he uses just one word, ‘dead’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character’s first reaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent tears trickled down his cheeks and splashed on the nails that covered his chest.</td>
<td>Paul Jennings could have written ‘Lehman began to cry’, but instead he writes in a much more powerful way. He begins the sentence with <em>tears</em>, making them the ‘doer’ instead of Lehman. He also uses the word <em>silent</em>. Silent tears sometimes show deeper and stronger emotions than loud sobs. The tears weren’t running or pouring down his cheeks. They <em>trickled</em>. This word choice suggests that this was a long, slow, painful cry from deep inside Lehman. Then Jennings follows the tears down Lehman’s body. The tears splash on his chest. Tears splash when they hit something hard, like the nails that now cover Lehman’s body. Mentioning the nails here helps us to understand the simile in the sentence to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character’s second reaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>He sat there like a sorrowful knight of old.</strong></td>
<td>Lehman’s reaction to his father’s death is just to sit there with his dad. This is an understandable reaction. But he is no longer a lonely boy who has lost his father. Paul Jennings wants us to understand that this boy has just been through an enormous physical and emotional challenge: he and his father have fought an angry sea. Lehman has rescued his father from the water and dragged him all the way up a steep path to get him to safety. Lehman is no longer just a boy. He has been in his first battle, like a knight, and has lost a comrade. Paul Jennings tells us that Lehman sat there like a <em>knight of old</em>. Knights from the olden days were fighters who defended the king or queen. They wore suits of armour and carried swords and shields. Paul Jennings uses the word <em>sorrowful</em>; that is, he is a knight full of sorrow. This is a powerful way of saying ‘sad’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A warrior in a coat of mail.</strong></td>
<td>This next sentence gives us more information about the knight. First, Paul Jennings has used another word for ‘knight’. This time he uses the word <em>warrior</em> (ie someone who has been to war) to emphasise the fact that Lehman has just fought the sea. Then he elaborates to remind us that Lehman is covered in nails. He says the warrior is in a <em>coat of mail</em>. Mail is a cloth made of metal chains which a spear or arrow cannot penetrate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crying for a friend who had fallen.</strong></td>
<td>This final sentence tells us what the warrior was doing as he sat. We already know that tears were trickling down Lehman’s face, but Jennings tells us again, this time explaining it as something a warrior would do. The word <em>friend</em> tells us how Lehman felt about his father: he wasn’t just his father, he was also his friend. And his father had indeed fallen, just as a warrior might fall in battle when struck down by a weapon. You could point out here that these phrases would usually be written as one long sentence, joined by commas. But this wouldn’t achieve the dramatic effect Jennings needs here. Separating the phrases with full stops makes us read with longer pauses so we have time to absorb the dramatic impact of the words.</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

Passage one will be worked on as three separate transformations.

Goals of the transformations

Once all these sentences have been worked on, the transformations will support students in learning how to introduce something scary and follow that introduction with a character’s reactions in order to stir the reader’s emotions.

Transformations – One

Text

*Lehman walked through the water past a deep, back cave in the rocks.*

Goals of the transformations

**Word choice**

(A useful question is, ‘If this word or phrase wasn’t here, what information would be missing? What wouldn’t we understand?’)

Working on sentence one will help students understand that authors describe important locations carefully to stimulate anticipation in readers. In this passage, Jennings has described part of the location, a cave, to signify its importance as a scary location, one that has possibilities as a hiding place. Students should also understand the effect of the elaborations the author has used.
**Word recognition leading to spelling**

Students working at this level may not need to do much work on word recognition, but don’t take this for granted: You will at least need to shuffle the word cards and ask the students to read them back to you, and follow this with a reconstruction of the sentence. It may be necessary to undertake further word recognition activities with particular students.

The students’ level of confidence will determine whether you can work on words from all three sections, or work on just one sentence at a time. The goal is successful spelling, so choose only as many words as the students can manage and still be successful.

**Word order**

*Working on sentence one will help students to understand why Paul Jennings has chosen to write* through the water before past a cave, and why in the rocks follows cave.

- *through the water* goes first because that’s where Lehman walked first.
- *past a deep, black cave* goes next because that’s where Lehman walked next.
- *in the rocks* follows *cave* because it provides extra information about the cave. (Try moving it to other places in the sentence to see if it would work anywhere else. For example, ‘Lehman walked in the rocks past a deep black cave’ has a different meaning.)

**Punctuation**

*Deep and black* are separated by a comma to help readers separate the words, and to create emphasis when they are read. (Take the comma away and try reading it more quickly. Then put the comma back in and read more slowly. Note the difference.)

If your students still need to work on sentence concept, and where to put the full stop, you can also use this sentence to identify other places that Jennings could have used a full stop and still made sense if he had not decided to elaborate even more.

**Writing**

Transformations on this sentence will support students in learning how to choose a verb to convey an intended meaning, how to extend a noun group with additional adjectives and how to extend a sentence with additional phrases (see notes on writing).
Example of text segmentation
Initially, the sentence could be segmented in the following way. Other segmentations may also be used.

Lehman / walked / through the water / past a deep dark cave / in the rocks / . /

Teaching focus

Character and what he did
The choice of walked moves the character to a scary place, but also shows that he wasn’t worried.

Where he went
The choice of through the water reminds us that he has been here before on his way to find his father. It also looks forward to when his father tries to find the cave in the storm: there is no way that the father can ‘walk through the water’ then.

The deep, dark cave provides somewhere for a scary thing to hide. Paul Jennings had mentioned the rocks before, but not the cave. He uses the words deep and dark to provide a good hiding place and to make it more scary.

in the rocks helps us to orient our thinking about where Lehman is. He doesn’t write ‘some’ rocks, he writes ‘the’ rocks; that is, the rocks we already know about.

Transformations – Two
Text
Something moved inside.

Goals of the transformations

Word choice
Working on sentence two will help students to understand how authors may choose vague, unspecific words at the beginning of a suspenseful passage to provide maximum opportunity to build suspense.

Writing
Transformations on the second sentence will support students in writing a vague description of a scary phenomenon to help create a suspenseful passage.
Example of text segmentation
Initially, the sentence could be segmented in the following way. Other segmentations may also be used.

*Something / moved / inside / . /

Teaching focus

**Some unknown thing**
The choice of *Something* leaves us guessing about what exactly the thing is. This is an important technique for building suspense. At this point, it might be an animal of some sort or a human. We can’t tell.

**What it did**
The word *moved* also leaves us guessing. The verb suggests that the *something* is animate, but we get no more clues than this. Paul Jennings didn’t use ‘shuffled’ or ‘hopped’ or ‘slithered’. These verbs would have given too much information away.

**Where it was**
*inside* really means ‘inside the cave’, but Jennings didn’t need to write all that because this sentence follows immediately after he has mentioned the cave.

Transformations – Three

Text

*The world froze. Lehman could hear the blood pumping in his head. A shiver spread over his skin like a wave. He choked off a cry.*

Goals of the transformations

**Word choice**
Working on this group of sentences will help students to understand how authors can describe a character’s reactions metaphorically, physically or verbally. (Reactions can also be mental, but there is no example of this here.) It will also help students to understand how elaboration using a simile helps readers to understand emotions.
You could also discuss Paul Jennings’s technique of using short, unelaborated sentences to create urgency in suspense or action sequences.

**Word order**
The only interesting word order comes in the third final sentence. You could talk about the fact that Paul Jennings could have told us that ‘Lehman shivered’, but instead turns the verb into a noun and begins the sentence with that noun. This way, the shiver is emphasised rather than Lehman. The phrase like a wave could
have been put at the beginning of the sentence. Students could try that order and you could talk about the impact it would make (but it would be a quite sophisticated discussion for experienced Accelerated Literacy students).

**Writing**
Transformations on this group of sentences will support students in describing a character’s reactions using metaphor and simile, and in describing physical and verbal reactions.

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

*The world / froze / . /
Lehman / could hear the blood / pumping in his head / . /
A shiver / spread / over his skin / like a wave / . /
He / choked off / a cry / . /

**Teaching focus**

**Metaphor suggesting how frightened a character is**
The purpose of these four sentences is to tell us just how frightened Lehman is by the thing in the cave.
This first sentence is called a metaphor. If you get a big enough fright, you may not be able to notice anything around you. Things seem to disappear into the background. *The world* didn’t really freeze, but absolutely everything around Lehman seemed to fade into the background. *Froze* suggests that nothing else seemed to move except that scary thing inside the cave. Sometimes when you get very frightened you can also suddenly feel very cold. This may be another reason why the author uses the word *froze*.

**Description of physical reactions to fear**
When you become very frightened, a chemical called adrenalin is released in your body to make your blood pump faster. Sometimes it pumps so hard you can hear it whooshing past your ears. This shows us just how frightened Lehman is, because there must be quite a lot of noise from the waves and the birds. All Lehman can hear is the blood rushing to his brain.

The next thing Paul Jennings tells us is that Lehman shivered. But he doesn’t begin his sentence with Lehman. This time he begins with *A shiver*. It’s not a little shiver. Jennings chooses *spread* to tell us that it wasn’t just a little shiver in one spot. Lehman was so scared that the shiver extended everywhere, all over his skin.
Jennings could have finished the sentence there, but he doesn’t. Instead he provides more information about that shiver. It moved over Lehman’s skin like a wave moves over a beach. A phrase that begins with the word like is a simile. A ‘like’ tells us that the thing being described is similar to something else we know. In this case, the shiver is similar to a wave. We know about waves, which helps us to imagine how the shiver spread over Lehman like a wave spreads across the sand.

**Description of verbal reactions to fear**

Verbal reactions are another way of telling us how a character is feeling. Letting out a yell or a cry is one reaction to fright. … *choked off* tells us that Lehman was too afraid to let out a full cry. It was just a little strangled cry that he really didn’t want to let out in case the scary thing heard him.

**Transformations – Passage two**

This section will be worked on as three separate transformations.

**Goals of the transformations**

The following transformations will support students in learning how to describe a character’s reaction to an event in a way that evokes strong emotions.

Students working at this level may not need to do much work on word recognition, but don’t take his for granted: You will at least need to shuffle the word cards and ask the students to read them back to you, and follow this with a reconstruction of the sentence. It may be necessary to undertake further word recognition activities with particular students.

The students’ level of confidence will determine whether you can work on words from all three sections, or work on just one sentence at a time. The goal is successful spelling, so choose only as many words as the students can manage and still be successful.
Transformations – One

Text

_Lehman knew that his father was dead._

Goals of the transformations

**Word choice**
Authors sometimes announce important events with a short, direct statement. Working on sentence one will help students to understand how their choice of words can convey certainty or uncertainty.

- The choice of *knew* leaves no doubt in our minds that this is definite.
- The choice of *dead* achieves the same purpose. There is no softening of the language here to something more euphemistic, such as ‘passed away’.

**Writing**
Transformations on the first sentence of the paragraph will support students in learning how to choose a verb to convey certainty or uncertainty.

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

*Lehman / knew / that his father was dead / .*

Transformations – Two

Text

_Silent tears trickled down his cheeks and splashed on the nails that covered his chest._

Goals of the transformations

**Word choice**
Working on sentence two will help teach students how to describe a character’s physical reaction using a nominalisation (in this case using _Silent tears_ instead of the verb ‘to cry’).

- The words _Silent tears_ tell us that Lehman’s crying is not loud. His tears are from deep within and show strong emotion.
- The word _trickled_ also suggests strength of emotion: Lehman’s tears were not gushing out, they were ‘welling up’ and coming out slowly.
- _down his cheeks_ tracks for us where his tears went first.
- _and_ is a conjunction or joining word that joins two sentences or actions. The silent tears did two things: they trickled and they splashed.
- _splashed_ tells us that the tears hit a hard surface. If they had hit his shirt, they would have soaked in.
• on the nails explains why Jennings used splashed. Nails are hard and would make the tears splash. They wouldn’t just soak in.
• that covered his chest. This clause elaborates on the nails. By adding this clause, Jennings is telling us that the nails were now growing on Lehman’s body, as well as on his arms and legs.

**Word order**
Working on sentence two will help teach students how to place something they want to emphasise at the beginning of the sentence (eg Silent tears). It will also help teach students how to combine two sentences or actions into one sentence.

• Jennings could have written ‘Lehman cried silent tears’ but he chose to put Silent tears at the beginning of the sentence. By doing this, he makes the tears more important, drawing them to our attention.
• Jennings could have written this one sentence as two. (Demonstrate this by removing and from the middle of the sentence.) However, because both parts of the sentence are about Silent tears, he has joined them using the conjunction ‘and’, and left Silent tears out of the second part.

**Writing**
Transformations on the second sentence will teach students how to place something at the beginning of a sentence to give it increased emphasis. Students will also learn how to choose verbs to convey particular meanings, and how to successfully join two sentences together.

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

Silent tears / trickled / down his cheeks / and / splashed / on the nails / that covered his chest / . /

**Transformations – Three**

**Text**

*He sat there like a sorrowful knight of old. A warrior in a coat of mail. Crying for a friend who had fallen.*

**Goals of the transformations**

**Word choice**
Authors use similes to build vivid mental images. Working on the third group of sentences will help teach students how to describe a character’s reactions using a simile, and how to elaborate on the simile using words with similar
meanings (in this case sorrowful knight and warrior). (You could also talk about Paul Jennings’s use of alliteration, or use of words beginning with the same letter, such as friend and fallen.)

- Lehman’s reaction to his father’s death is to sit. This tells us how exhausted and unhappy he is.
- Paul Jennings adds another simile to help us imagine the scene. He chooses knight of old to take us back to Lehman’s battle with the sea. In case we are not sure what a knight looks like, the author then strengthens the simile by using another phrase for knight; that is, warrior. Jennings then elaborates again, this time adding a coat of mail to remind us that the nails now also cover Lehman’s chest.
- The clause beginning with crying refers to the warrior. Here Paul Jennings is further elaborating on the simile by describing what the warrior might have been doing after a battle: he might have cried for a friend who had fallen.
- Here Jennings has chosen two words beginning with the same letter: friend and fallen. This is called alliteration, which is used for poetic effect and to draw attention to the words.

**Punctuation**

Working on the third group of sentences will help students understand how the use of full stops instead of commas slows the text down and adds gravity and dignity. Here, the third group of sentences could be written as one long sentence, with commas separating each clause. However, Paul Jennings is writing about a sad event, the death of Lehman’s father, and Lehman’s reaction to it, so he slows his writing down and draws it out by using full stops instead of commas.

**Writing**

Transformations of the third group of sentences will teach students how to describe a character’s reactions using simile, to extend the simile using similar wording and to elaborate on that simile with an action. You could also work with students on alliteration.

Example of text segmentation

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

*He / sat there / like a sorrowful knight of old / . /
A warrior / in a coat of mail / . /
Crying / for a friend / who had fallen / . /"
**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

Although this text is benchmarked for Years 7–8, some students may still be negotiating the transitional stage of spelling. They will need to work on words that help them use visual strategies, such as noticing larger chunks of letters that go together to make orthographic patterns. Remember not to push students too quickly into trying to find words with similar patterns. If they can’t read them back to you, it is too early.

Students who can successfully spell most or all the words in the sentence can begin to work on tasks that extend their knowledge of orthographic patterns and research and discuss the etymology of interesting words.
Examples from passage one

The following suggestions are words from the text. Words with similar patterns should be taught where they are appropriate for your class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-alk-</td>
<td>w/alk/ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ough</td>
<td>thr/ough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-at-</td>
<td>w/at/er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ast</td>
<td>p/ast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-eepl</td>
<td>d/eepl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ack</td>
<td>bl/ack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ave</td>
<td>c/ave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ock</td>
<td>r/ock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ome</td>
<td>s/ome/th/ing or s/ome/thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ove-</td>
<td>m/ove/d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ide</td>
<td>in/s/ide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-wor-</td>
<td>wor/ld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-oze</td>
<td>fr/oze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ould</td>
<td>c/ould</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ear</td>
<td>h/ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-oom</td>
<td>m/oom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ump-</td>
<td>p/ump/ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ead</td>
<td>h/ead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-iver</td>
<td>sh/iver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sk-</td>
<td>sk/in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ike</td>
<td>l/ike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-oke</td>
<td>ch/oke/d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-y</td>
<td>cr/y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-each</td>
<td>b/each/ed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples from passage two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kn–</th>
<th>–ather</th>
<th>who</th>
<th>–ere</th>
<th>–est</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kn/ew</td>
<td>f/ather</td>
<td>wh/o</td>
<td>th/ere</td>
<td>ch/est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kn/ight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>–ickle</th>
<th>–own</th>
<th>–ee–</th>
<th>–ash–</th>
<th>–ail–</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tr/ickle/d</td>
<td>d/own</td>
<td>ch/ee/k/s</td>
<td>spl/ash/ed</td>
<td>n/ail/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or spl/ashed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>–over</th>
<th>–iend</th>
<th>–ear–</th>
<th>–ent</th>
<th>–ight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c/over/ed</td>
<td>fr/iend</td>
<td>t/ear/s</td>
<td>s/il/ent</td>
<td>kn/ight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(link to ‘shiver’ in first passage)</td>
<td>A mnemonic might help here: you ‘fri your friend to the end.’</td>
<td>link to ‘hear’ from passage one</td>
<td>or sil/ent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>–old</th>
<th>warr–</th>
<th>–oat</th>
<th>–ail</th>
<th>–orrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>old</td>
<td>warr/ior</td>
<td>c/oat</td>
<td>m/ail</td>
<td>s/orrow/ful</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 and http://www.thefreedictionary.com.

Examples from passage one

choked: from the Old English word meaning ‘jaw’ or ‘cheek’
world: from the Old English word meaning ‘life on earth’

Examples from passage two

warrior: from the Old French word meaning ‘one who wages war’
friend: from the Old English word freond, meaning ‘to love and favour’
Joint reconstructed writing

Joint reconstructed writing provides a transition from spelling activities to writing activities and works best when taken from transformations. Joint reconstructed writing involves the teacher and students working together to reconstruct the text using the same words as the author. It successfully reduces the stress associated with working out what to write about, what to write and how to write it. Stress associated with spelling is greatly reduced, giving students the mental space to think about subject matter and language choices.

The teacher ‘thinks aloud’ to reconstruct a passage with the students, using the writer’s language choices. This is a culmination of all the shared knowledge built up so far about language choices used in the construction and positioning of particular phrases and includes the dimensions of letter formation, the role of initial consonants and blends, and visual patterns.

Example

What you could say

Let’s write the sentences that describe Lehman moving past the scary place, the deep cave. Paul Jennings has written that Lehman just started walking past the cave. All that happened was that he saw something move inside the cave, but then he experienced dramatic physical reactions to his fear. Paul Jennings describes these in detail. First he describes Lehman’s involuntary reactions, and then his attempts to escape. Let’s practise writing the things that happened to his body first.

Or

Now let’s practise describing two or three of Lehman’s physical reactions to the scary thing, the two staring eyes, in the same way as Paul Jennings.

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 ‘Nails’ would include:

- overall goals such as jointly planning a narrative that begins, like ‘Nails’, with a significant event from the end of the story.
- short-terms goals such as jointly reconstructing parts of the story that
Writing contribute to students’ understanding of its structure and the significance of the author’s language choices, and short workshop activities based on the practice of a writing strategy.

Activities

Workshops based on passage one

**Possible writing workshop**

Think of and list other settings that would be scary (eg a graveyard or a forest at night). Practise writing sentences that move a character into a scary place.

Think about building suspense by describing a scary thing without giving away too much information, at least to begin with.

Using different settings, compose a metaphor that demonstrates how frightened a character is (eg ‘The world disappeared’, ‘The waves stopped’, ‘The trees moved towards me’).

Think about then write, either individually or jointly, some other physical reactions that show fear (eg ‘Yuko could feel the hairs rising on the back of her neck’, ‘Samuel could feel the sweat oozing from his brow’, ‘Jasmine could feel her scalp prickling’, ‘Ahmed could taste the dry saliva in his mouth’).

Write, either individually or jointly, a physical or verbal reaction to fear that includes a simile (eg ‘Her heart began to pound like a crazy drum’, ‘His hair stood on end like a spinifex bush’, ‘A gasp burst out of her mouth like air out of a balloon’). Write, either individually or jointly, a physical or verbal reaction to another emotion that includes a simile (eg ‘A smile spread over her face like the sun rising’, ‘A red rage burst from his eyeballs like a flood’).

Write, either individually or jointly, a verbal reaction that demonstrates fear (eg ‘She stifled a scream’, ‘He opened his mouth to scream but nothing came out’). Write, either individually or jointly, a verbal reaction that demonstrates another emotion (eg ‘She breathed a sigh of relief’, ‘He began to cry’).

Write, either individually or jointly, a paragraph that takes a character to a scary place, introduces a scary thing and describes three of the character’s reactions to it. For example: ‘Joanna crept down the path past the crumbling, moss-covered headstones. She caught the smallest glimpse of something moving. Her body froze. She could feel the hair rising on the back of her neck. Sweat covered her forehead like a blanket. She covered her mouth to stop a cry.’

**Transformation**

*Lehman walked through the water past a deep, black cave in the rocks.*

*Something moved inside.*

*The world froze.*

*Lehman could hear the blood pounding in his head.*

*A shiver spread over his skin like a wave.*

*He choked off a cry.*

*When all the above sentences have been workshopped*
### Workshops based on passage two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language choice</th>
<th>Points for discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lehman knew that his father was dead.</td>
<td>Practise writing sentences that make a statement about an event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent tears tricked down his cheeks and splashed on the nails that covered his chest.</td>
<td>Make a list of verbs that express physical or verbal reactions, (eg laugh, cry, shiver, moan). Turn them into nouns and compose a sentence beginning with each noun. For example: ‘A deep laugh burst out of her throat and filled the room.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He sat there like a sorrowful knight of old.</td>
<td>Learn how to use a simile to build a picture. Make a list of possible actions and add a simile to help convey the emotion that goes with each one. For example: ‘He jumped up like a dolphin bursting out of the sea.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A warrior in a coat of mail.</td>
<td>Depending on your students, it may be appropriate to follow on from the previous sentence to teach students how to reword a phrase in order to elaborate on its meaning (eg a sleek, silver body; a limp wrinkled sack).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crying for a friend who had fallen.</td>
<td>Paul Jennings describes the actions of the sorrowful knight. Students can learn how to describe an action to help build a picture (eg ‘leaping for joy’, ‘shrinking towards the ground’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When all the above sentences have been workshopped</td>
<td>Write, either individually or jointly, a paragraph that begins with a character discovering something important, then describes the character’s responses to it. You could practise writing both positive or negative responses. For example: ‘Sally knew her team had won. A feeling of exhilaration pumped through every vein and artery. She leapt into the air like a dolphin diving through the surf. A sleek glistening creature in her body suit, she was full of the joy of life.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other possible workshops

- Work on the subsequent descriptions of the scary thing so that students learn how to provide readers with increasing detail in order to sustain suspense.
- Together, compose some ways of saying ‘He/She looked … ’ that convey a quick or slow look, an angry look etc. For example: She glared, He saw for a second, She caught a glimpse, He snatched a frightened glance. (Note that this activity may be too difficult for some students.)
- Work on writing sentences that convey several things happening at once, as Paul Jennings does when he writes: *He turned and thrashed through the water. Half swimming. Half running. Falling. Splashing in panic.*
Writing a narrative

Here are some suggestions on how to support students in writing a whole narrative.

Setting

Jennings often places unusual events in familiar settings. As a class, list some familiar settings for use in story writing. Draw plans or maps of where the characters might go.

Characters

Jennings often uses children or young people as his main characters. He wants readers to identify and sympathise with these characters. As a class, list some possible main characters. Will they be male or female? Give them a name and an age. Draw them.

Plot

‘Nails’ is a story about someone with a problem that turns out not to be a problem at all. In fact, by the end of the story the main character has found happiness, is no longer lonely and has discovered that he is not the odd one out. As writers, students need to think about an affliction their characters could have that can be turned into something positive. It could be a physical attribute, or a mental one. Following are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Twist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-year-old orphaned girl</td>
<td>Hairy body</td>
<td>Turns out to be a werewolf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit bat</td>
<td>Only likes to eat meat</td>
<td>Discovers she is an owl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duckling</td>
<td>Doesn’t look like others</td>
<td>Grows into a beautiful swan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-year-old boy</td>
<td>Keeps growing tall</td>
<td>Recruited by basketball scout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Sarah</td>
<td>Turns into an ogre every night</td>
<td>Finds true happiness with another ogre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant event

‘Nails’ begins with the main character about to take part in a significant event. This serves to hook the reader into the story. Paul Jennings then goes back in time to describe the events that led up to this one. As writers, students need to think of an event that emotionally affects their main character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>‘Hooking in’ event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-year-old orphaned girl</td>
<td>Hairy body</td>
<td>About to have total laser treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit bat</td>
<td>Only likes to eat meat</td>
<td>Eats everything in sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duckling</td>
<td>Doesn’t look like others</td>
<td>Leaves home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-year-old boy</td>
<td>Grows tall</td>
<td>About to run away from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Sarah</td>
<td>Turns into an ogre</td>
<td>About to lock herself in a tower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing plan

Using Paul Jennings’s story of ‘Nails’, negotiate a writing plan. It might look something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant event (from end of story)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go back in time and introduce main character, setting and problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complication</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem gets worse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem reaches climax.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Something or someone intervenes, and the problem is resolved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you have negotiated a writing plan, some students will be confident enough to write their own. For other students, however, this will be a more difficult undertaking, and the danger in this case is that the students will revert to their old writing style, forgetting all the resources available to them from their work on ‘Nails’. For these students, alternatives would be to take one section at a time, negotiate a shared example, then invite the students to write their own, or negotiate a new story in a small group, with appropriate support. If writing one section at a time, remind students of the resources available to them in the original story (eg description of setting, use of weather, character’s reactions). Each time, read back over what you and the students have written to aid their understanding. You can consolidate the learning by giving students the same plan and asking them to write a new story more independently.

Activities in other learning areas

The following activities could support the work undertaken in Accelerated Literacy, but would not occur in Accelerated Literacy time.

**Technology**
- Drawing on information in the text, design and construct a three-dimensional model of the island. Record Lehman’s journeys down to the beach.
- Find a way of making a person look like Lehman, covered in scales.

**Art**
- Design and construct a scary thing in whatever medium is currently being explored. The scary thing can be used as the basis for some writing workshops.
- Make fish prints and use them to examine the pattern of scales on a fish’s body.

**Science**
- Study tides and the impact of storms on wave height.

**Studies of Society and Environment**
- Research mermaids and mermen in various cultures.
- Look at how the chain mail used in armour was constructed.

**Media Studies**
- View ‘Nails’ in *Round the Twist*. Look at the differences between the book and the television version and hypothesise about why these occur. Check out Paul Jennings’s website to find out what he has to say about the adaptations needed for *Round the Twist*. 
Sample weekly plan

The following week’s plan is included as a guide only to the way teachers could move through the teaching sequence over a period of time. Parts of the session not finished can be picked up the next lesson. 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 within the teaching sequence.

As this sample weekly planner was used for authentic lessons, it shows links to previous lessons. Links to other activities are also included, but are suggestions only.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low order literate orientation</td>
<td>Read Chapters 1–6, focusing on inferential meanings.</td>
<td>Read rest of story, focusing on inferential meanings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Talk about the stages of a narrative: talk through where stages begin and end in this story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High order literate orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Continue to work on spelling words from previous text.</td>
<td>Spelling from first and second sentences: w/alk/ed; th/rough; w/ater; s/ome/th/ing</td>
<td>Spelling from first and second sentences: w/alk/ed; th/rough; w/ater; s/ome/th/ing</td>
<td>Build lists of words with similar patterns: alk; ough; ome; ing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Reconstructed Writing</td>
<td>Text reconstruction of final sentence from previous text.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Text reconstruction of first and second sentences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop first and second sentences: joint construction, then students choose from brainstormed settings, using their own scary things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>In technology lesson, begin to plan our 3-D model of the island, referring to descriptions in story.</td>
<td>In library lesson, arrange with librarian to do some research on mermaids and mermen in various cultures.</td>
<td></td>
<td>In art lesson, students begin to design and construct their own scary thing: human, animal or imaginary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Photocopiable masters
... he walked through the water past a deep, black cave in the rocks.

Something moved inside.

The world froze.

Lehman could hear the blood pumping in his head.

A shiver spread over his skin like a wave.

He choked off a cry.

Two dark eyes stared out at him.

He turned

and thrashed through the water.

Half swimming.

Half running.

Falling.

Splashing in panic.
He fell
and sank under the surface.

When he came up
he snatched a frightened glance back at the black space between the rocks.

He caught a glimpse of a man’s face.

Staring.

Watching.

Hiding.

Lehman fled along the beach,

stumbling in terror,

not daring to look behind him.

He didn’t stop
until he reached the bungalow.

He rushed inside.
The thin walls and open windows offered no protection.

But he felt better.

His breath slowed.

His heart beat less loudly.
Nails – Study passage two (45 words)

Lehman knew that his father was dead.

Silent tears trickled down his cheeks

And splashed on the nails

That covered his chest.

He sat there like a sorrowful knight of old. A warrior in a coat of mail.

Crying for a friend who had fallen.
These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 7. However, they could also be used in Year 8 where students have difficulties with reading. In this story Paul Jennings deals with the death of a parent, so the story may not be appropriate for younger students.

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.