Upper Primary

These short-version notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 4 or 5. However, they could also be used up to Year 8 where students have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

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

Notes

- The following notes have been written for teachers who have attended professional development workshops in teaching Accelerated Literacy and who are now experienced in using the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence.
- 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.
Using this resource
Year level

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The text

‘Smelly Feat’ is from Unbearable! by Paul Jennings. Published 1990 by Penguin Group (Australia). Page numbers provided here refer to this edition.

Smelly Feat
Synopsis of the story

This story is funny at one level, but it also carries an important environmental message. The hero, Berin, finds that his unusually smelly feet have the power to put others to sleep. He eventually uses this power to save a South Pacific sea turtle from the school bully and his friends.

Themes

The themes of ‘Smelly Feat’ include:
- coping with being different
- coping with bullying
- the importance of caring for endangered animals and the environment.

Structure of the text

Study passage one (pages 130–131)

Sometimes an author introduces a character by letting readers know what she or he is doing, observing and thinking. This strategy can be used to foreshadow events to come, as well as to help readers identify with the character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Berin, the main character: how he felt.</td>
<td><em>I was sick of them picking on me</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What he did/his reactions.</td>
<td>1. <em>every time I took off my shoes.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. <em>I shoved my socks into my runners and stomped off to my bedroom.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. <em>I threw myself down on the bed</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. <em>and looked around the room.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What he saw/his observation and introduction to Garlic.</td>
<td><em>Garlic was running around in her cage.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I tapped the wire with my toe.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More information about Garlic.

Garlic was my pet mouse.
'At least you like me,' I said.
The little mouse didn't say anything.
Not so much as a squeak.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complication</th>
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</table>
| An event occurs that eventually leads Berin to discover that his feet have supernatural powers. Garlic's behaviour. | In fact something strange happened. Garlic sniffed the air.
Then she closed her eyes and fell asleep. |
| Berin's actions. | I jumped up and tapped the cage.
Nothing. Not a movement. |
| Berin's thoughts. | At first I thought she was dead
but then I noticed her ribs going in and out.
She was breathing.
I ran across the room to fetch Dad. |
| Garlic's behaviour. | But just as I reached the door I noticed Garlic sit up and sniff. She was all right. |
| Berin's action. | I ran over to her. |
| Garlic's behaviour. | She started to totter as if she was drunk.
Then she fell over and settled down into a deep sleep. |
| Berin's thoughts. | I walked away and waited on the other side of the room. |
| Garlic's behaviour. | Garlic sat up and scampered around happily. |
| Berin's reflections. | Something strange was going on.
Every time I went near the cage, Garlic would fall asleep.
When I left she woke up.
My mouse was allergic to me.
I looked at my feet.
It couldn't be. Could it? No.
They weren't that bad. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution</th>
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</table>
| Berin’s discovery. | *I put on my slippers and approached the cage.*  
*Garlic was happy.*  
*I slowly took off one slipper and held a foot in front of the wire.*  
*Garlic dropped like a stone. She didn’t even have time to wrinkle her nose.*  
*I put the slipper back on.*  
*Garlic sat up and sniffed happily.*  
*This was crazy.*  
*My feet smelt so bad they could put a mouse to sleep.*  
*Just like chloroform.*  
*I had to face up to it.*  
*Even though I couldn’t smell a thing,*  
*I had the strongest feet in the world.* |
Accelerated Literacy teaching
Teaching the sequence

The National Accelerated Literacy Program consists of a cycle of interrelated activities based on a sequence beginning with literate orientation and focused on one selected text. The text may vary from a short, illustrated story written for early childhood students to several carefully selected passages from a longer book intended for older students.

Teachers spend, on average, an hour and a half a day teaching Accelerated Literacy. The total number of weeks spent on a text across a sequence of consecutive lessons will vary according to the age of the students and the complexity of the text.

Low and high order literate orientation are carried out before reading. The other strategies use the students’ fluent reading of and common knowledge about a text as teaching resources for extending their literacy competence.

Further information on the teaching sequence can be found at http://www.nalp.edu.au.
In the classroom
The teaching sequence on ‘Smelly Feat’ aims to teach:
- how to read the book 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 detailed description about a dramatic natural event, using time phrases to stage the sequence of events, simile and metaphor to create vivid images and personification of natural phenomena.

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

Teaching focus

‘Smelly Feat’ is a funny, yet serious story about a boy, Berin, who is constantly teased about his smelly feet. He soon discovers that the fumes have an upside, however: they can send animals and people to sleep. Berin uses the power of his feet to save a South Pacific sea turtle from being killed by some cruel children at his school. The title is a pun: the main character has smelly feet, which he uses to perform a smelly feat.

The story is both funny and ridiculous, with an environment message and some excitement. Berin is a character who is laughed at and bullied at school, and ridiculed at home because of his foot odour, but who loves animals and will go to some lengths for them.
The parts of the text to be studied in the teaching sequence can be used to teach students to use simile and metaphor in their writing and to use complex noun groups in writing descriptions.

Teaching focus

The main character, Berin, tells the story, which opens with his father and sister teasing him about his unusually smelly feet. Retreating to his room, Berin discovers that his feet are even more unusual than he first thought: just like chloroform, their smell can put his mouse to sleep.

This chapter is very important because in it the author sets up a situation where readers discover the strange power of the smell of Berin’s feet.

Paul Jennings often starts stories by telling of an incident that serves as an example of something that will be important later in the story; eg, the incident involving Miss Pebble in ‘Spooks Incorporated’.

Read Chapter 1 to the class.

Teaching focus

Berin discovers that his foot odour can also knock out a slightly bigger animal, the family cat, though not a huge animal like the neighbourhood Alsatian. The dog is clearly bothered by the smell, however. It whimpers and bolts away when Berin approaches. At this time the smell doesn’t appear to have any effect on humans.

Read Chapter 2 to the class.

Teaching focus

Feeling that the world is against him – first humans object to his feet, and now animals, too – Berin goes for a soothing walk on his favourite spot, Turtle Island. We learn that he is an animal lover and is particularly fond of an old South Pacific turtle, Shelly, that will soon be coming to the island to lay eggs.

But even on the island, Berin cannot escape others’ reactions to his smelly feet: seagulls collapse all around him, littering the beach like feathery corpses. Berin cleans his feet in the salty water, and watches in relief as the seagulls return to life. The animals of the world were safe again. This incident should be noted because it is important later in the story.

Chapter 3 also contains a short description of the plight of the South Pacific sea turtles that helps explain why Berin later takes the action to save the turtle.

Read Chapter 3 to the class.
Still at the beach, Berin overhears some boys talking. He recognises their leader, a school bully named Horse, and learns that they plan to kill Shelly when she lays her eggs on the island in three months time. Horrified, Berin confronts the gang, but the boys simply ridicule him and throw him into the water.

Paul Jennings describes Horse and his gang so that readers are in no doubt that they are up to no good. All their actions and their treatment of Berin exemplify their nastiness. Readers also learn from this chapter that Berin is a child who is sometimes bullied at school.

*Read Chapter 4 to the class.*

Determined to save the turtle, Berin starts to formulate a plan. He has three months before she is due to lay her eggs and three months to put his plan into action.

*Read Chapter 5 to the class.*

Berin’s plan, naturally enough, involves his smelly feet. He will put his enemies to sleep during the time it takes Shelly to lay her eggs and return to the sea. His feet will have to be smellier than ever to knock out three large boys, so Berin decides to go for three months without taking his shoes and socks off in order to let the odour grow.

*Read Chapter 6 to the class.*

Three months have passed. Berin goes to class, figuring that Shelly will be safe during school hours, only to discover that the bullies aren’t there. He tries to leave for the island, only to be prevented by his teacher.

*Read Chapter 7 to the class.*

Cool in a crisis, Berin takes off his shoes and socks – revealing *long black nails, putrid toes and slimy furry skin* – and watches as his teacher and classmates collapse. He hurries to the island, rendering passers-by unconscious as he goes. The smell of his feet, unwashed for three months, is indeed unbearable.

*Read Chapters 8 and 9 to the class.*
**Teaching focus**

Berin’s plan hits a snag: as he hurries through the water that borders the island, his smelly feet are washed clean. Their power has gone.

*Read Chapter 10 to the class.*

**Teaching focus**

While Berin has lost his power, he hasn’t lost his courage. He confronts the bullies, *yelling and screaming, trying to distract them from their search.* Annoyed, they corner him. Just when it seems as if all is lost, and a terrible beating is on the way, Berin produces his socks – the same socks that have encased his *rancid* feet every day for the past three months. The bullies drop to the ground, fast asleep.

*Read Chapter 11 to the class.*

**Teaching focus**

Leaving the sleeping bullies, Berin watches Shelly lay her eggs and swim safely back to sea. When Horse and his friends wake up, they are terrified by his strange powers. The story ends with Berin hatching a plan to save Shelly and her eggs again the following year.

*Read Chapter 12 to the class.*

**Read the story aloud**

Having read the whole story, sections at a time, you may choose to read the whole story or parts of it again, particularly the sections that include the study passages. This rereading will help keep the study passages in context.
High order literate orientation – Passage one

This section (pages 130–131) relates a short incident crucial to the orientation of the story, in which the power of Berin’s feet becomes evident. Paul Jennings doesn’t just say, ‘Berin was a small boy whose smelly feet had strange powers’, he lets Berin and the reader make the discovery together. This helps readers identify with Berin: we don’t just read about his experiences, thoughts and feelings, we share them.

Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural organisation</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This paragraph acquaints readers with Berin’s reactions to his family’s teasing. It relates what he thought (mental reactions) and what he did (physical reactions).</td>
<td><em>I was sick of them picking on me every time I took off my shoes.</em></td>
<td>The author invites readers to identify with Berin’s hurt feelings: many children feel that their families are not fair to them at times. Readers can also begin to develop an image of Berin’s character. It sounds as if he is quite sensitive, and the sort of person who would be motivated to save a turtle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because Berin was in his room, he turned his attention to his pet. This sets the scene for the next incident.</td>
<td><em>I shoved my socks into my runners and stomped off to my bedroom.</em> <em>I threw myself down on the bed</em></td>
<td>The author doesn’t simply tell us Berin was angry. Word choices like <em>shoved</em>, <em>stomped</em> and <em>threw</em> (instead of, say, ‘put’, ‘walked’ and ‘lay’) show us that he’s angry. These word choices convey angry actions that reflect his feelings and would inform his family that he was angry too.</td>
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<tr>
<td>and looked around the room.</td>
<td>Berin can’t just leave his bedroom now he has stormed into it. From his bed, he started to look around.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Garlic was running around in her cage.</em></td>
<td>Note that we aren’t told who or what Garlic is. This part of a strategy to intrigue readers and encourage them to read on to find out more.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I tapped the wire with my toe.</em></td>
<td>Berin might have turned to Garlic as an upset child might turn to a pet for comfort. The author now focuses the reader’s (and Berin’s) attention on Garlic.</td>
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### Paragraph two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This paragraph is about Garlic and her unexpected reaction to Berin tapping the wire of her cage with his feet.</th>
<th>Garlic was my pet mouse.</th>
<th>This confirms what readers probably expected – that Garlic is a pet. The name was probably chosen because of its relationship to a strong odour.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘At least you like me,’ I said.</td>
<td>Berin’s comment reminds us of his hurt feelings and provides a motive for seeking Garlic’s company. He wants to be comforted.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Paragraph three and four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The writer describes Garlic’s unexpected behaviour in detail, as readers have to understand all the implications of this event in order to understand the rest of the story.</th>
<th>The little mouse didn’t say anything. Not so much as a squeak.</th>
<th>The author hints that Garlic’s non-response is important by using two sentences where one might do.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In fact something strange happened. Garlic sniffed the air. Then she closed her eyes and fell asleep.</td>
<td>Paul Jennings tells readers that the mouse sniffed the air first to give readers a hint that it was something to do with the air that made her fall asleep. This is confirmation that a key plot development is on the way. Paul Jennings signposts it very clearly – something strange happened – to make sure we pay attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I jumped up and tapped the cage. Nothing. Not a movement. At first I thought she was dead but then I noticed her ribs going in and out. She was breathing.</td>
<td>What had happened to Garlic was so unusual that Berin forgot about his other worries. His attention (and ours) is now on the little mouse. Paul Jennings again uses two sentences to emphasise Garlic’s non-response.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garlic’s strange behaviour initiates a series of responses from Berin.</td>
<td>The author describes the two characters’ actions. Garlic is acting strangely and Berin is reacting to her behaviour.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I ran across the room to fetch Dad.</em></td>
<td>Garlic’s behaviour is clearly strange enough to rattle Berin, who wants his father’s help despite being angry with him.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>But just as I reached the door I noticed Garlic sit up and sniff. She was all right.</em></td>
<td>The conjunction <em>But</em> tells us that Berin didn’t carry out the planned action. Instead, before he could fetch his Dad, the mouse recovered – she was all right. She could sit up and sniff – behave normally, in fact.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I ran over to her. She started to totter as if she was drunk. Then she fell over and settled down into a deep sleep.</em></td>
<td>Paul Jennings uses a simile here to help readers picture the scene more clearly. Garlic wasn’t really drunk, but her behaviour resembled that of someone who was. Paul Jennings describes the scene like this so that, like Berin, we can all come to the conclusion that it is something about Berin that is affecting the mouse. This incident is being used to illustrate how Berin found out about his feet’s strange powers. Paul Jennings stages the incident to emphasise this moment of discovery.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I walked away and waited on the other side of the room.</em></td>
<td>Berin starts to see a possible link between Garlic’s behaviour and his presence. Rather than simply telling us Berin’s thoughts, Paul Jennings reveals them through his actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Garlic sat up and scampered around happily.</em></td>
<td>Paul Jennings uses a light-hearted word – <em>scampered</em>. That is quite a different meaning from tottered. Then he adds that she scampered <em>happily</em>. It is important Paul Jennings lets readers know that Berin’s feet are not dangerous. They have a strange effect on living creatures but they don’t do any lasting harm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraphs six, seven, eight and nine</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>These paragraphs are an account of the conclusions Berin reached as he observed, and then reflected on, Garlic’s strange behaviour. The conclusions he reaches are described in detail to ensure we take notice of the importance of this incident.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Something strange was going on.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Here is another sure signal that what is coming next is important to the story.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Every time I went near the cage, Garlic would fall asleep. When I left she woke up. My mouse was allergic to me.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The link between Garlic’s behaviour and Berin’s presence is confirmed.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I looked at my feet. It couldn’t be. Could it? No. They weren’t that bad.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>However, Berin didn’t stop his reasoning there. He shifted his attention to focus specifically on his feet.</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>I put on my slippers and approached the cage. Garlic was happy. I slowly took off one slipper and held a foot in front of the wire. Garlic dropped like a stone. She didn’t even have time to wrinkle her nose. I put the slipper back on. Garlic sat up and sniffed happily.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With this experiment Berin covered all possibilities. With his slippers on, Garlic was happy. With them off and close to the cage, she fell asleep. The author illustrates the suddenness with which Garlic fell asleep with a simile (she dropped like a stone), which he then elaborates on for added emphasis (She didn’t even have time to wrinkle her nose). Jennings wants readers to appreciate how powerful the smell must be.</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>This was crazy. My feet smelt so bad they could put a mouse to sleep. Just like chloroform. I had to face up to it. Even though I couldn’t smell a thing, I had the strongest feet in the world.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Berin’s final reflections he faces up to the fact that his feet do have the power to ‘put his mouse to sleep’. He compares his feet to chloroform, a substance once used as a general anesthesia. Even though Berin could not smell his foot odour, Berin’s family could, although at this stage they were not put to sleep. Only a very small animal was affected. Paul Jennings talks up the power of Berin’s feet still more: he has the strongest feet in the world. (Note that the author doesn’t say that Berin had the strongest smelling feet in the world. While they do have a strong odour, they are also going to perform strong feats.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

This part of the text (page 143) sees Berin put his plan to save Shelly into action. On finding that Horse and his gang were not at school on the day that the turtle was due to lay her eggs, Berin has resorted to taking off his shoes in school. He could not talk the teacher into letting him go home, so taking his shoes off at that point was all Berin could think of to do.

The strength of this description of the appearance of Berin’s feet and the smell they were producing is necessary because of the power they are going to exert over a great number of people. Earlier descriptions of animals falling asleep didn’t involve this number of victims. The description has to make the effect the feet have seem possible.

Teaching focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Structural organisation</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Berin responds to finding that Horse and his gang are not at school</td>
<td>I looked at my feet. I looked at the running shoes and socks that hadn’t been changed for three months. I bent down and undid the laces. Then I pulled off my shoes and socks. I stepped out into the aisle. In bare feet.</td>
<td>At the beginning of this paragraph Paul Jennings conveys the way Berin’s mind is working. He didn’t actually see his feet first of all, just his running shoes and socks. (It is important that Paul Jennings reminds readers that the shoes and socks would smell too because of what happens later.) He has been preparing them for this day for three months. He has taken baths with his feet in plastic bags and rubbed his socks in dirt to look as though he was changing them. He has worked hard at this plan. He decided to act by doing four things in sequence. The sentences here are short and decisive to match the urgency Berin was feeling. All but the last start with I or Then I, to show that Berin is in control of the action. The final short sentence, In bare feet, focuses on the part of Berin that is important now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Atmosphere

This segment of the text foreshadows what happened as a result of Berin taking off his shoes. Paul Jennings wants to build suspense, so doesn’t immediately tell us that everyone in the room fell asleep.

The room suddenly grew silent. The hairs stood up on the back of my neck.

Here is further evidence of the power of Berin’s feet: the usual classroom noise didn’t fade gradually, it stopped suddenly. This is the reaction people often have to something eerie or frightening, which suggests that Berin was spooked. (Remind the students of other times Paul Jennings uses this type of reaction.)

Description of Berin’s feet

The silent room and the eerie feeling make Berin look down at his feet. The author then describes vividly what Berin saw.

I looked at my feet.

The focus returns to Berin’s feet. He had previously taken off his shoes, now readers discover what the feet were like after three months inside Berin’s running shoes. The description covers four areas.

Long black nails curled out of my putrid toes. Slimy, furry skin was coated with blue sock fuzz.

This part provides readers with some powerful images. Note that while we have previously been told that Berin’s feet are smelly, this is the first attempt to truly disgust us: we are coming to the climax of the story, so the author is going for broke.

Paul Jennings has used noun groups to describe the toe nails. They were long black nails. Long because of the time they have been left uncut, and black because they had not been washed. The way the nails grew is described as curled out. Presumably they curled over the top of Berin’s toes as they tried to find room inside his shoes to grow. Berin’s toes were my putrid toes. Putrid means a state of foul decay or rotten. Its meaning also relates to the smell of decaying flesh. Berin’s toes nails, therefore, not only looked disgusting, we know they smelled disgusting too. The skin of Berin’s feet was slimy, furry skin – an interesting choice of words. Normally something slimy would not also be furry and so the next part of the sentence explains the furry allusion. The skin was coated with blue sock fuzz. The blue sock fuzz had managed to stick to the slime on his feet. Berin must have been wearing blue socks for the whole three months so the fuzz was blue.

The prolonged description also has the effect of keeping us in suspense, waiting to find out what has happened to the rest of Berin’s class.
**Swollen veins ran like choked rivers under the rancid flesh.**

Another interesting simile to sharpen our mental image (in case we weren’t already disgusted enough!). The humidity of the running shoes would tend to have this effect.

**The air seemed to ripple and shimmer with an invisible stench.**

The final part of this description shifts the focus from Berin’s feet to the air around them. It is an important shift because readers now begin to focus on the effect of the smelly feet in addition to their appearance. *The air seemed to ripple and shimmer with an invisible stench.* The writer doesn’t mean that it actually did ripple and shimmer. *Seemed to* means that the appearance of the feet was so vile that it wouldn’t have been surprising if the air had actually rippled and shimmered. *An invisible stench* is a dreadful smell that can’t be seen. Some gases with an awful stench can be seen but this one couldn’t.

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**High order literate orientation – Passage three**

The text of study passage three appears on pages 149–150. The model presented for study passage one can be used to develop a teaching sequence for the study of this passage, leading to the development of specific reading, spelling and writing skills.

**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.

Passage one follows an incident in which Berin’s father and sister have been teasing him about the way his feet smell. His father was really trying to be funny but his sister was being more sarcastic. As a result of this, Berin’s feelings were badly hurt. Discuss how Paul Jennings uses writing strategies such as explicit and powerful verbs, eg shoved, stormed, threw, etc. The author introduces the feature that is going to resolve the complication of the story.
The author has to put Berin in a situation that will lead to his discovery of the power of his feet so the rest of the story can flow.

This passage from the book mainly relates actions – those of either Garlic or Berin. The use of one part of the passage that could be used for transformations and paragraph level writing exercises is explained below.

Text (page 130)

*I was sick of them picking on me every time I took off my shoes. I shoved my socks into my runners and stomped off to my bedroom. I threw myself down on the bed and looked around the room.*

Example of text segmentation

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

*I was sick of them picking on me / every time / I took off / my shoes / . / I / shoved / my socks / into my runners / and / stomped off / to my bedroom / . / I / threw myself down / on the bed / and / looked / around the room / . /*

Teaching focus

In this segment of the text the character, Berin, was experiencing a very strong feeling. His family’s teasing had upset him to such an extent that he reacted with a series of four actions.

Points for discussion

**Berin feels upset**

*Sick of them* is a way of saying Berin was angry and upset. *Them* refers to the members of his family. The author starts this part of the text by telling readers something about how the main character felt after his sister had been mean to him.

This part of the sentence tells readers why Berin was sick of his family. They had been picking on him. This is a way of saying that they have been singling him out for some special, but not pleasant, attention. No-one is ever picked on about anything pleasant.

This part of the sentence tells readers how often Berin is being picked on. Berin can never take off his shoes without someone making a comment about him.

**His reactions**

Paul Jennings doesn’t tell readers what room the family were in when they picked on Berin but it was there that he had taken off his runners. He initiates his response to his family’s teasing by shoving his socks into his runners. This action of ‘shoving’ is an angry action and would let his father and sister know he was upset.
‘Stomping’ is also an angry way of walking, so Berin is stomping to his bedroom for refuge. His father and sister evidently don’t do anything to soothe him.

Berin is still angry. The bed would be a natural enough thing for him to go to in this situation. He didn’t throw himself down on the floor or out of the window or anything uncomfortable.

Berin is lying on his bed and now he is able to look around. He may have felt at a bit of a loss. He had stomped out, no one had followed him to help, he was on his own and so he looked around the room for something to do. At this stage, the author has Berin in a position to focus his attention on his pet.

Subsequent Transformations

Following this example, teachers go on to choose other parts of the text for subsequent transformations.

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

Words from the transformations that could be used in spelling lessons are as follows:

- Words that end with –d or –ed (eg sh/ove/d, st/omp/ed, l/ook/ed).
  Discuss why you have cut the words into these chunks. Look at the way –d is added to ‘shove’ but –ed is added to ‘look’ and ‘stomp’.
• Words with short vowels followed by double consonants (eg s/ick, p/ick/ing, off, s/ock/s, r/unn/er/s. (Note that –ck is a scribal convention. When texts were handwritten, scribes preferred to write –ck rather than –kk.)
• A word with an interesting origin is sh/oe/s. It is from the word shoon – to shoe, from the Old English, scoh.

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.

Joint reconstructed writing

Reconstruct the paragraphs that have just been completed for transformations. Joint reconstruction of these sections and others will greatly assist with the discussion in the writing workshops.

Discuss the language choices made by the writer and his reasons for them. In passage one the focus will be on why a writer might choose to foreshadow coming events by describing something that upset the character. The language choices allow readers to immediately identify with the character at the same time as discovering with him how his feet have special powers.

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.

Students need to understand that the author hasn’t just written about Berin’s feelings to help get to know him: Berin’s reactions to those feelings set up an important incident in which both Berin and the reader find out about the special power of his feet. We also find out that Berin is a sensitive person who is hurt by teasing. This is the sort of person who would care about the welfare of a rare breed of turtle.

Explain to students how writing about a character’s feelings, and his or her actions based on those feelings, can help introduce a significant part of a story.
Writing workshop on paragraph one

Discuss some situations in which a person may feel hurt, angry or miserable in the way that Berin was. For example:

- A young brother or sister breaks a valuable toy or model.
- Someone comes out of school to find their bike has been damaged or stolen.
- A character is given a present that they really like, and it breaks too easily.
- Someone is blamed for something they didn’t do.

Choose a situation to write about jointly.

Example one

If students are going to write about a young brother breaking a Lego model, they would start by writing about how the character felt:

*Kath couldn’t stand her younger brother breaking her Lego models into tiny pieces whenever she was at school.*

Then write about her reactions (don’t insist on four):

*She pushed her brother out of the room and slammed the door. Then she grabbed the pieces of Lego and opened the cupboard to put them in a box.*

Example two

If students are going to write about a character being blamed for something he or she didn’t do, they would start by describing the character’s feelings:

*Ben felt angry that the others immediately blamed him for the broken bottle.*

Then write about his reactions (don’t insist on four):

*He collected the bits of broken glass, wrapped them in newspaper and hurled the package into the bin.*

Further writing activities

Following the joint writing, allow the students who think they know what to do to write independently about a similar situation. Allow those who want to use part of the joint writing in their own writing to do so, and invite any students who do not feel sufficiently confident about writing independently to join you in another joint writing activity.
I was sick of them picking on me every time I took off my shoes. I shoved my socks into my runners and stomped off to my bedroom. I threw myself down on the bed and looked around the room. Garlic was running around in her cage. I tapped the wire with my toe.

Garlic was my pet mouse. ‘At least you like me,’ I said.

The little mouse didn’t say anything. Not so much as a squeak. In fact something strange happened. Garlic sniffed the air. Then she closed her eyes and fell asleep.

I jumped up and tapped the cage. Nothing. Not a movement. At first I thought she was dead but then I noticed her ribs going in and out. She was breathing.

I ran across the room to fetch Dad. But just as I reached the door I noticed Garlic sit up and sniff. She was all right. I ran over to her. She started to totter as if she was drunk. Then she fell over and settled down into a deep sleep. I walked away and waited on the other side of the room. Garlic sat up and scampered around happily.
Something strange was going on. Every time I went near the cage, Garlic would fall asleep. When I left she woke up. My mouse was allergic to me.

I looked at my feet. It couldn’t be. Could it? No. They weren’t that bad. I put on my slippers and approached the cage. Garlic was happy. I slowly took off one slipper and held a foot in front of the wire.

Garlic dropped like a stone. She didn’t even have time to wrinkle her nose. I put the slipper back on. Garlic sat up and sniffed happily.

This was crazy. My feet smelt so bad they could put a mouse to sleep. Just like chloroform. I had to face up to it. Even though I couldn’t smell a thing, I had the strongest feet in the world.
I looked at my feet. I looked at the running shoes and socks that hadn’t been changed for three months. I bent down and undid the laces. Then I pulled off my shoes and socks.

I stepped out into the aisle. In bare feet.

The room suddenly grew silent. The hairs stood up on the back of my neck. I looked at my feet. Long black nails curled out of my putrid toes. Slimy, furry skin was coated with blue sock fuzz. Swollen veins ran like choked rivers under the rancid flesh. The air seemed to ripple and shimmer with an invisible stench.
I put the socks near the sleeping bullies. Then I walked down to the beach.

Old Shelly was digging a hole with her flippers. Slowly, painfully, she dug and dug and dug. She was helpless. ‘Don’t worry, girl,’ I said. ‘I won’t hurt you.’

I sat a little way off and watched the miracle. I watched the eggs drop like beads from a broken necklace. The sun sank into the sea, lighting the old turtle with gold.

I watched as Old Shelly covered the eggs and then crawled back towards the shore. Just as she reached the edge she turned. And nodded her head as if to thank me.

‘Think nothing of it,’ I said. ‘Your eggs are safe now. I’ll see you next year.’

I have to admit there was a tear in my eye as I watched her sink under the water and swim out beneath the silvery arms of the rippling moonbeams.
I went back and fetched the socks. I threw them in the sea and waited. In no time at all, Horse and his mates started to stir. They sat up and peered into the darkness. They couldn’t work it out. It was light when they had fallen asleep. They didn’t know where the sun had gone.

Suddenly Horse gave an enormous scream. He ran for it. The others followed him, belting along the sand as it a demon was after them. They thought I had strange powers. I guess if you think about it, they were right in a funny sort of way.

I walked slowly home.

A nasty thought entered my mind. What if Horse found more members for his gang? What if they came back to wait for Old Shelly next November?

I was worried. Then I chuckled and spoke to myself. ‘If I start going to bed with my shoes on tonight,’ I said, ‘my feet ought to be pretty strong by this time next year.’
Upper Primary

These short-version notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 4 or 5. However, they could also be used up to Year 8 where students have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

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

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

Notes

- The following notes have been written for teachers who have attended professional development workshops in teaching Accelerated Literacy and who are now experienced in using the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence.
- It is also assumed that teachers have read the text on which these notes are based and have a detailed understanding of the text before beginning a teaching sequence.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring the suitability of the text on which these notes are based for their particular teaching context.

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