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 story at 90 per cent accuracy or above
- contribute to class discussions about the meaning and inferences contained in the author’s language choices
- spell fluently and write clearly the words taught as part of the teaching sequence
- 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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The Strap-Box Flyer
Upper Primary
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text

‘The Strap-Box Flyer’ is from Unreal! by Paul Jennings. Published 1985 by Penguin Group (Australia). Page numbers provided here refer to this edition.

The Strap-Box Flyer
The Strap-Box Flyer

Synopsis of the story

A travelling salesman, Giffen, makes money by selling his product, Giffen’s Great Glue, in little towns around the country. Giffen’s Great Glue sticks amazingly well – but only for four hours. Then it stops working completely. Giffen knows his glue doesn’t work, yet he still sells it and makes a lot of money. However, he always makes sure he leaves town before the four hours are up so that he doesn’t get caught. Because people trust Giffen and his glue, they use it, and get into all sorts of trouble as a result. Giffen doesn’t care: he just wants to make money. Eventually he has to suffer the consequences of selling glue that only works for four hours.

Why use this story?

Teachers who have taught the passage about Miss Pebble from ‘Spooks Incorporated’ (in Quirky Tales by Paul Jennings) will recognise many similarities when they read about the plight of Miss Tibbs in ‘The Strap-Box Flyer’. For this reason, this story makes a good follow up to ‘Spooks Incorporated’ for older students with literacy difficulties. For those who haven’t studied ‘Spooks Incorporated’, this story works on its own merits as a dire warning against dishonesty and taking advantage of other people.

Structure of the text

‘The Strap-Box Flyer’ is a narrative with an easily identified structure.

Orientation: Chapter 1

The author introduces readers to Giffen and his product, Giffen’s Great Glue. Paul Jennings explicitly foreshadows the complication, as readers will wonder whether any glue could be as good as Giffen promises.

Complication: Chapters 2–3

Of course, the glue does not live up to the promises, which has consequences for all those who bought it. The author foreshadows that Giffen will suffer some consequences himself.

Resolution: Chapters 4–7

Giffen wants his own strap-box flyer, but this produces a dilemma because he needs to leave town before his glue stops working. Giffen suffers the consequences of having sold fake glue.
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
In the classroom

The teaching sequence on ‘The Strap-Box Flyer’ 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 in which a character loses something precious.

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

Orientation
Introduction to Giffen and his product, Giffen’s Great Glue
- Giffen makes a great deal of money selling a wonderful glue that sticks anything to anything. Paul Jennings gives two examples of the glue’s strength.
- People who see the demonstrations of the glue quickly buy it.
- The complication is foreshadowed when readers wonder how any glue could really be this good.
- Giffen’s admission (to himself) that the glue does not work emphasises to the reader what a nasty person Giffen is. It is clear that he doesn’t care about anyone but himself.

Read Chapter 1 to the class.
Teaching focus

Complication
Problem: The glue is not what it appears
- Giffen is selling a glue that stops working after four hours. Someone who knowingly sells a defective product is dishonest. A glue that people depend on to work, but doesn’t, has the potential to put buyers in great danger.

Consequences for people who have bought Giffen’s Great Glue
- The author provides readers with two examples of the consequences: Miss Tibbs, an old lady who loses something extremely precious to her; and Scott Bridges, who dies when the glue fails.

Foreshadowing
- The examples of the villain’s callous behaviour invoke the readers’ sympathy for the victims, as well as anger towards the person who acts so cruelly.
- Readers can expect that Giffen will suffer the consequences of his behaviour.

Read Chapters 2 and 3 to the class.

Teaching focus

The resolution
The strap-box flyer
- While Giffen expects that Flinty will be dishonest and that the strap-box flyer will be as useless as his own glue, he finds that it really works. Immediately, he tries to see how he could make money from it.

A dilemma for Giffen
- Giffen wants to have his own strap-box flyer, but he knows he needs to leave Horsham before his glue stops working. He doesn’t remember that Flinty had bought some glue from him. (It is not stated in the text, but as Giffen had sold 300 tubes of glue that morning, it’s likely that he would have paid attention only to the money and not noticed who actually bought it.) Flinty trusts Giffen, but Giffen is intent on trying to steal the design of the strap-box flyer from Flinty.

Finally, Giffen suffers the consequences of selling fake glue
- In his excitement about the potential of the strap-box flyer, Giffen forgets the time. While both he and Flinty are flying high above the ground, Flinty innocently mentions that he had used Giffen’s Great Glue to assemble the flyer. Four hours have passed and Giffen sees his strap-box flyer break into bits. He starts to fall. He screams all the way down.

Read Chapters 4–7 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.

Refine the focus to the study passages

Once you have made a start on reading the book and have read at least the first three chapters, you can begin to study passage one more closely.

High order literate orientation – Passage one

Text (pages 23-24)

Readers have already learned that Miss Tibbs is elderly and alone in the world. Ask students to imagine and discuss what she might look like and how she might spend her time. From this discussion, introduce the study passage.

Miss Tibbs appears to be an independent woman who keeps herself busy with her china collection. When authors want readers to understand how much the loss of something means to someone, they need to make it clear how important that particular thing is to the person. In this passage, the author’s choice of language shows how important Miss Tibbs’s china collection is to her.

Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Points for discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miss Tibbs’s hobby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Miss Tibbs collected china.</em></td>
<td>Discuss the purpose of collections. What satisfaction do people get from collecting? What does being a china collector tell us about Miss Tibbs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Expansions that explain details of her hobby** | The author provides details of Miss Tibbs’s collection of china. The phrase *spent all of her life* relates to her age. Does this make the collection more precious? Does it make the china more valuable? 
Discuss the nature of the china collection. What would it look like? 
If the pieces are from all over the world, does that mean Miss Tibbs has travelled widely? Perhaps it made the china irreplaceable. The phrase *so many pieces* hints at Miss Tibbs’s age, as well. She had collected many pieces, each one with a memory. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How long</strong></td>
<td><strong>What was in the collection</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *She had spent all of her life saving pieces of china.* | 1. *She had plates and cups and saucers from all over the world.*  
2. *She also had little china dolls and toy animals.*  
3. *She had so many pieces that she didn’t know where to put them all.* |
| **Consequence of having a large collection** | The word *this* encompasses all the information that has gone before. 
Readers now understand why Miss Tibbs purchased the glue. They can now predict the possible disastrous outcome of her purchase. |
| *This is why she wanted the glue.*  
*She wanted to put up a new shelf.* | **The event sequence that describes how Miss Tibbs goes about making the shelf** |
| **Her actions**  
*As soon as she got home*  
1. *Miss Tibbs went*  
2. *and fetched a piece of wood from the shed in her back garden.*  
3. *Then she put some of Giffen’s Great Glue along the edge of the wood*  
4. *and stuck it onto the wall.* | **Observations**  
*It worked well. The shelf was very strong.*  
**Reaction**  
*‘This is wonderful glue,’ she said.*  
*‘It dries straight away.’* |
| **Imag**ine Miss Tibbs putting up a shelf. 
Make the procedure she went through very clear.  
Was the way she made the shelf sensible? A shelf stuck only by one edge would not ordinarily be very strong.  
However, Miss Tibbs had seen the demonstration of Giffen’s Great Glue and believed it to be exceptional. | Miss Tibbs’s observations and reactions emphasise the apparent qualities of the glue. It appears to be doing all that she wants. |
### How Miss Tibbs used the shelf

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Her actions</th>
<th>Note that <em>started to put</em> tells us that Miss Tibbs has many items to display. We already know that she has a lot of china, and this choice of words emphasises that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Miss Tibbs started to put her china pieces on the shelf.  
2. She decided to put her favourite piece out first. It was a small china horse. | The order in which Miss Tibbs chooses to fill her shelf centres around her favourite piece. Note that the author describes her favourite piece by talking about who gave it to her and how long she had had it. Her precious horse is put in the best spot on the shelf. |
| *(Expansion)*  
She had owned it for many years. It had been given to her by her father before he died.  
Miss Tibbs loved this horse.  
She put it in the best spot, right in the middle of the shelf.  
3. After she had put all of the other pieces out Miss Tibbs sat down and had a rest. | We feel sympathy for Miss Tibbs because putting china on a shelf has worn her out. She doesn’t know what is going to happen in four hours, so she sleeps peacefully. |
| *(Expansion)*  
She was very tired.  
4. She fell asleep in her armchair in front of the fire. | This part of the text describes what happens when the glue fails. Although readers have predicted the outcome, the author makes clear exactly how bad it is for Miss Tibbs when it happens. Ask students to speculate about how Miss Tibbs felt. |

### What happens when the glue fails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence of events</th>
<th>This part of the text describes what happens when the glue fails. Although readers have predicted the outcome, the author makes clear exactly how bad it is for Miss Tibbs when it happens. Ask students to speculate about how Miss Tibbs felt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Four hours later Miss Tibbs was woken up by a loud crash.</td>
<td>This part of the text describes what happens when the glue fails. Although readers have predicted the outcome, the author makes clear exactly how bad it is for Miss Tibbs when it happens. Ask students to speculate about how Miss Tibbs felt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *(Expansion that tells why)*  
2. The glue had stopped working.  
3. The shelf had fallen off the wall and all of the china pieces were smashed. | Earlier, the horse, Miss Tibbs’s most precious piece, was described in detail. The author also told us how much Miss Tibbs loved it. Now he describes exactly how it looks when it is broken. Note that he doesn’t describe every broken piece, only her favourite. |

### Miss Tibbs’s reactions to the breaking of her collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Tibbs’s reactions to the breaking of her collection</th>
<th>Earlier, the horse, Miss Tibbs’s most precious piece, was described in detail. The author also told us how much Miss Tibbs loved it. Now he describes exactly how it looks when it is broken. Note that he doesn’t describe every broken piece, only her favourite.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Miss Tibbs went down on her hands and knees.  
2. She started to pick up all of the broken pieces.  
3. Then she remembered her horse.  
   Her precious horse.  
4. She looked for it among the bits.  
   She couldn’t find it. | Earlier, the horse, Miss Tibbs’s most precious piece, was described in detail. The author also told us how much Miss Tibbs loved it. Now he describes exactly how it looks when it is broken. Note that he doesn’t describe every broken piece, only her favourite. |
(Expansion—exactly how she felt
and what she saw)
5. Then she found something that made
her cry.
   A leg and a tail and a tiny head.
   The horse was smashed to pieces.
6. Miss Tibbs cried and cried.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Tibbs reacts to the glue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. She got her tube of Giffen’s Great Glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and threw it in the fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Then she decided that she would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and find Giffen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. She would tell him that his glue was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. She would ask him to pay for the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broken china.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Miss Tibbs makes a connection with the |
| glue and realises that it was no good. |
| She is very angry and destroys it. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Tibbs’s actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She hurried back to the place where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giffen had been.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But he was gone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was no sign of him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She knew that he would never come back.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Miss Tibbs is a feisty woman who is |
| determined to make Giffen pay. He is too |
| smart, however, and has long since left |
| town. |

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 – One

When authors want to make readers feel sorry for a character, they sometimes write about the character losing something precious. When they have lost this precious thing because of another character’s deliberate cruelty, then readers feel sorry for the loser and annoyed or outraged at the villain. In this paragraph we learn about how much Miss Tibbs’s china collection matters to her.

Text (page 23)

*Miss Tibbs collected china. She had spent all of her life saving pieces of china. She had plates and cups and saucers from all over the world. She also had little china dolls and toy animals. She had so many pieces that she didn’t know where to put them all.*

Example of text segmentation

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

*Miss Tibbs / collected / china / . /
She / had spent / all of her life / saving / pieces of china / . /
She / had / plates and cups and saucers / from all over the world / . /
She / also had / little china dolls and toy animals / . /
She / had / so many pieces / that / she / didn’t know / where to put / them all / . /

Teaching focus

- The passage is about Miss Tibbs. The first sentence starts with her name and each of the next five clauses start with *she* (referring to Miss Tibbs). Putting *she* in the theme position each time builds empathy for Miss Tibbs. This strategy also emphasises the importance of the hobby to Miss Tibbs.
- Authors will generally refer to their characters’ hobbies or interests for a reason: it might be to develop the character or, as in this instance, the hobby is the reason for the character’s presence in the story. An author will generally expand on the importance of the hobby and describe it in enough detail for a reader to be able to visualise it and identify with the character’s emotions. In this case, Paul Jennings provides three expansions, emphasising the number and variety of pieces in Miss Tibbs’s china collection.
- The author describes one piece – the china horse – as being really special, and so when it is destroyed the reader feels very sorry for Miss Tibbs.
- There is a connection between *collected* and *saving pieces of china*. They describe the activity. The verb *had* allows the author to identify the various pieces in the collection.
• The fact that Miss Tibbs had spent all of her life on this hobby makes the collection even more precious. She is old, so she has spent a long time collecting the pieces. They were from all over the world, so would probably also be quite valuable.
• These precious objects needed to be put somewhere, not hidden away, but on display. People usually display their collections. This is why Miss Tibbs buys the glue and becomes one of Giffen’s victims.

Further transformations

You should proceed with other transformations as best suits your class. You could discuss how the author includes the character’s motives and feelings and the sequence of events. You could also discuss the suspense contained in readers’ balancing their shared pleasure in Miss Tibbs’s shelf against the certain knowledge that it is going to break.

Draw attention to the connection between *china, pieces of china, pieces* and *china piece*, which refer to Miss Tibbs’s collection and later *broken pieces* and *smashed to pieces*, which refer to the bits the china collection is broken into. Miss Tibbs also used a *piece of wood* for her shelf.

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

- The word *piece* is important in this text. The chunk –*iece* also occurs in *n/iece*; however, –*iece* is not very common. It could be related to words the class has spelled that have –*ie*– patterns or words that have –*c*– that sounds like –*s*– (eg *s/auc/er*).
- There are also words with an –*ash* pattern, as in *cr/ash, sm/ash, sm/ash/ed*.

Etymology

Etymological information on selected words is always interesting for students. Many websites, as well as dictionaries and other books, provide etymological information. Two informative websites are [http://www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com) and [http://www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com).

Joint reconstructed writing

Jointly reconstruct the parts of the text you have used for transformations, discussing the writing techniques that apply to each passage as you do so.

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 ‘The Strap-Box Flyer’ could include:

- overall goals such as writing, with appropriate teacher support, a short narrative in which a character loses something precious.
- short-term goals such as how to write about a hobby or desirable activity; how to write about a character’s thoughts, feelings and reactions; and how to make readers sympathetic towards a character.
Activities

Workshop one: How to describe a hobby or pastime

Miss Tibbs’s hobby, as described in the story, is as follows:

**Hobby**

*Miss Tibbs collected china.*

**Time involved**

*She had spent all of her life saving pieces of china.*

**Details**

- *She had plates and cups and saucers from all over the world.*
- *She also had little china dolls and toy animals.*
- *She had so many pieces that she didn’t know where to put them all.*

Example

**Hobby**

Robert collected autographs.

**Time involved**

He had been collecting them for more than 10 years.

**Details**

- He had signatures of some very famous people.
- He had football players’ signatures, cricket players’ and even a few famous tennis players’. His best was Leyton Hewitt’s signature from the day Australia won the Davis Cup.
- He kept some of the autographs glued into a book, but his very best were on T-shirts, which he kept in a drawer in his bedroom. Of course, he never ever wore those T-shirts.

Workshop two: How to write so that readers identify with a character’s emotions

What happened, as described in the story, is as follows:

**Miss Tibbs’s reactions to the breaking of her collection: actions and thoughts**

1. *Miss Tibbs went down on her hands and knees.*
2. *She started to pick up all of the broken pieces.*
3. *Then she remembered her horse. Her precious horse.*
4. She looked for it among the bits. She couldn’t find it.

(Expansion: exactly how she felt and what she saw)

a. Then she found something that made her cry.

b. A leg and a tail and a tiny head. The horse was smashed to pieces.

5. Miss Tibbs cried and cried.

Example

Robert finds that his father has washed his T-shirts.

1. Robert scrabbled through the washing piled on his bed.

2. Then he remembered his favourite autograph.

3. He threw his shorts and undies onto the floor

4. and snatched up his T-shirts.

a. Then he found something that almost stopped his heart beating.

b. The T-shirt that used to have Leyton Hewitt’s signature across the front was crumpled up with his jeans. The signature was completely washed away.

5. Robert sat on the floor of his bedroom and cried.

Independent writing

Plan and write a short narrative in which a character loses something she or he treasured. Include a description of what the precious thing was and how it came to be damaged or lost altogether.
Miss Tibbs collected china. She had spent all of her life saving pieces of china. She had plates and cups and saucers from all over the world. She also had little china dolls and toy animals. She had so many pieces that she didn't know where to put them all. This is why she wanted the glue. She wanted to put up a new shelf.

As soon as she got home Miss Tibbs went and fetched a piece of wood from the shed in her back garden. Then she put some of Giffen's Great Glue along the edge of the wood and stuck it onto the wall. It worked well. The shelf was very strong.

‘This is wonderful glue,' she said. ‘It dries straight away.' Miss Tibbs started to put her china pieces onto the shelf. She decided to put her favourite piece out first. It was a small china horse. She had owned it for many years. It had been given to her by her father before he died. Miss Tibbs loved this horse. She put it in the best spot, right in the middle of the shelf.

After she had put all of the other pieces out Miss Tibbs sat down and had a rest. She was very tired. She fell asleep in her armchair in front of the fire.

Four hours later Miss Tibbs was woken up by a loud crash. The glue
had stopped working. The shelf had fallen off the wall and all of the china pieces were smashed.

Miss Tibbs went down on her hands and knees. She started to pick up all of the broken pieces. Then she remembered her horse. Her precious horse. She looked for it among the bits. She couldn’t find it. Then she found something that made her cry. A leg and a tail and a tiny head. The horse was smashed to pieces.

Miss Tibbs cried and cried. She got her tube of Giffen’s Great Glue and threw it in the fire. Then she decided that she would go and find Giffen. She would tell him that his glue was no good. She would ask him to pay for the broken china.

She hurried back to the place where Giffen had been. But he was gone. There was no sign of him. She knew that he would never come back.
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 story at 90 per cent accuracy or above
- contribute to class discussions about the meaning and inferences contained in the author’s language choices
- spell fluently and write clearly the words taught as part of the teaching sequence
- use the story as a model for writing.

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