INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH TEXTS

English K-10 Resource

CHARACTERISATION
REPRESENTATION
PERSPECTIVES
INTERPRETATION

NSW GOVERNMENT Education & Communities

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING PROJECT

This project supports teachers in focussing on the content and concepts in the NSW English K-10 Syllabus when programming, while addressing the 'general capability' of ***Intercultural Understanding*** in units of learning. General capabilities are embedded in the content of the English Syllabus. Through their choice of a diverse range of quality texts teachers are able to ensure that student learning involves high order thinking around the central concepts or 'big ideas' in English. All resources used in the project are available for loan from the Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre library.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The project demonstrates one example of how 'general capabilities' may be addressed through teaching English syllabus outcomes and content

CONCEPTUAL PROGRAMMING IN ENGLISH

Students respond to a diverse range of quality texts which build intercultural understanding, and model these in their own composing as they investigate English concepts such as:

- **Characterisation**
- **Representation**
- **Perspectives**
- **Interpretation**

THE HENRY PARKES EQUITY RESOURCE CENTRE LIBRARY

- The library loans resources to all DEC educators in NSW
- Texts used in the Intercultural Understanding Project, as well as interactive kits and professional learning resources are available free of charge from the library

Centre contact details:
Mimika Avenue,
Whalan NSW 2770
Telephone: (02) 8808 1177
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ADOBE CONNECT RECORDING: https://connect.schools.nsw.edu.au/p6eelyjo11w/

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CHARACTERISATION TEXT SET

Text title	Medium
EARLY STAGE 1	
• Black skin, white cow	Picture book
• Picturescape	Picture book
STAGE 1	
• Sunday Chutney	Picture book
• Madlenka	Picture book
• Zahra	Animation
STAGE 2	
• Jamil's shadow	Novel
• Shake a leg	Picture book
• My two blankets	Picture book
STAGE 3	
• Photographs in the mud	Picture book
• Birthday boy	Animation
• Yoko's diary	Non-fiction diary
• The island	Picture book

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

This project was completed in collaboration with: the NSW DEC Equity and Multicultural team, English K-10 team, Australian Curriculum – English K-10 team and the following teachers from metropolitan, rural and regional schools:

Lauren Braun – Peakhurst PS
Tracy Caldwell – Sir Henry Parkes Memoria PS
Jane Lobsey – Jesmond PS
Boutsakone Sayasenh – Burrumbuttock PS
Elizabeth Williams – Casula PS

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 1

Stage EARLY STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Explore the different contributions of words and images to meaning in stories and informative texts. (ENe-8B)
- Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts. (ENe-10C)

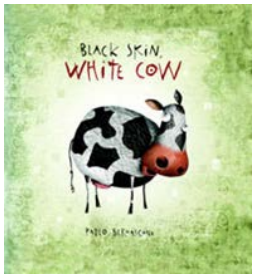
Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Black Skin, White Cow by **Pablo Bernasconi**

Published by Random House Australia, 2004, Australia

Medium: Picture book



The cow wants to get rid of her black spots. In the end, she realises that she was happier the way she was.

Students can appreciate how we are alike and different and this will lead to an early understanding of the superficial traits that are used to form stereotypes. The text provides a cultural metaphor and concludes with the message that people belong to different cultures that may have different values and ideals.

The out of proportion details in the illustrations deepen the characters' expressions. The exaggerated facial features enhance the reader's insight into what the character is thinking about being different.

Excerpt 1

Page 15 shows the cow realising that she has made a mistake trying to change what she looks like.

"I want to look like a cow. I want my spots back!"

► Students can identify how understanding thoughts and feelings are an important part of character development.

Excerpt 2

Page 19 is the final page of the story and is when the character comes to a point of self-realisation and values who she is.

"But now she was happy and proud to be both black and white."

► Students can discuss how the composer has led the reader to understand the cow's change of heart. By examining the expressions of the characters and listing the positive words in the text, students are able to comprehend the resolution of the story.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 2

Stage EARLY STAGE 1

Content links to text:

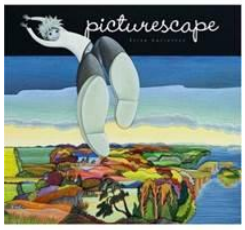
- Respond to a range of imaginative and creative texts, including visual media. (ENe-10C)
- Communicate the purposes of drawings and other visual media. (ENe-10C)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Picturescape by **Elisa Gutierrez** Published by Simply Read Books, revised edn. 2007, Canada

Medium: Picture book



This wordless picture book follows the journey of a boy to the local art gallery where his imagination takes flight.

The story is based in Canada and portrays a journey through important aspects of the main character's world over time. As his travels move on and his understanding of who he is increases, more cultural elements are embedded in the illustrations.

The character is stylised and has overly large feet. The use of different image sizes and organisation allows for the movement of time. Simplified facial expressions make for easy interpretation of how the character feels. The creativity allows the reader to realise that literary characters can transcend the bounds of reality.

Excerpt 1

Page 1 gives us an introduction to the character and an insight into his emotions and values.

► Students discuss the significance of the character's proportions in the illustration, leading towards interpreting the scene in their own words.

Excerpt 2

Page 22 has the character in different positions and places which show how the movement of place and time add to our understanding of the motives of the character.

► Students can discuss how a character is developed throughout the course of a story and how we learn more about their cultural heritage by reading the pictures.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 3

Stage STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Identify visual representations of characters' actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words. (EN1-4A)
- Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences. (EN1-11D)

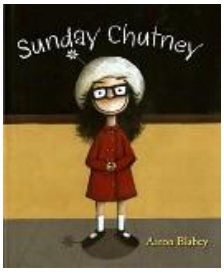
Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Sunday Chutney by **Aaron Blabey**

Published by Front Street, Incorporated, 2009, USA

Medium: Picture book



Sunday Chutney has the most extraordinary life – she has lived all over the world! Of course, moving around does mean that she's always the new kid at school and never really has a place to call home.

Sunday Chutney is exposed to a variety of different experiences living around the world. She is often the new child in school, and in that she often feels vulnerable and exposed. These emotions mirror those of newly arrived migrants and refugees who have experienced alienation through cultural upheaval and who long for acceptance, security and stability.

Sunday's character is developed through the use of mixed media illustrations and direct self -description. Sunday knows that everyone thinks she is a bit weird and although she demonstrates resilience and a positive attitude to the changes in her life, the undertone indicates, that deep down, Sunday feels lonely and somewhat isolated.

Excerpt 1

Sunday stands in front of her new class. The class looks at her from their desks.

► Students analyse the salient features in these two images such as Sunday Chutney's name, the spotlight, and the perspectives of the lone child and the class. Students could list how these factors build understanding of the characters.

Excerpt 2

In this picture, Sunday faces isolation and loneliness, depicted by the positioning of her as a small image being dwarfed by the hill. Her imagination provides an outlet for coping with these emotions. The reader sees the world through Sunday's eyes, a strategy the illustrator has used to evoke empathy with Sunday.

► Students use this example to search for other indications in the book that represent the protagonist's emotions.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 4

Stage STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created. (EN1-11D)
- Identify creative language features in imaginative texts that enhance enjoyment, eg illustrations, repetition. (EN1-10C)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Madlenka by **Peter Sis**

Published by Square Fish, reprint edition 2010, USA

Medium: Picture book

Madlenka has lived in the same apartment building ever since she was born. Everyone in the neighbourhood is her friend from the French baker to the Asian shopkeeper. A trip around the block to tell them about her wiggly tooth is like a trip around the world.

Madlenka's community is rich with cultural influences. Readers identify with Madlenka as she engages with her neighbours – a diverse group of people from all around the world. Visual techniques such as die-cut windows highlight the rich cultural diversity in the local community.

Madlenka is the centre of her world. This is portrayed in the framing of the pages and closeup perspectives. In a number of sequential images, the character is represented as the only colourful image on a grey background.

Excerpt 1

"In the universe, on a planet, on a continent, in a country, on a block, in a house, in a window, in the rain, a little girl named Madlenka…"

► Students explore the introduction to Madlenka which allows the reader to locate her in the world. We see her as she sees herself – clearly placed at the centre of her own universe. This is visually evident throughout the book, and reinforced at the end of the story.

"Madlenka! Where have you been?"
"Well … I went around the world."

► Students explore the dual meaning of this statement. She has been around her world but also has a vast range of worldly experiences with her culturally diverse friends.

Excerpt 2

"Bonjour Madeleine. Let's celebrate."
"Sathsariakal Madela. Good news!"
"Buon giorno, Maddalena. This calls for a treat."
"Guten tag Magda. Let me tell you a story."
"Hola Magdalena. Senorita Magdalena!"
"Tashi delek, Mandala. That's a lucky sign."

► Students discuss the positive reactions between the central character and her neighbours. The illustrations and greetings in a range of languages reinforce the students' understanding the importance of language in intercultural understanding.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 5

Stage STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences. (EN1-11D)
- Explore different ways of expressing emotions, including verbal, visual, body language and facial expressions. (EN1-1A)
- Predict and discuss ideas drawn from picture books and digital stories. (EN1-10C)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Zahra by **Ramya Chidanand** senior these completed at Ringling College of Art & Design (Computer Animation Department).

Medium: Animation

This is an African story about a child who spends all day collecting water in order to help her tree grow so she can have some shade. It is not until a bead of sweat falls on the roots that she begins to see hope.

The difference in the way Zahra lives is highlighted by her traditional dress and her use of the water pump, a central feature of the film. The act of watering the plant is out of necessity and reveals just one aspect of her life. This allows students to compare the difficulties that children in other areas of the world may face with their own. It is important to note that this representation of African culture would need to be supported by other resources.

Zahra is a strong character whose persistence and determination are evident in her narrative and facial expressions. Zahra's spirit is challenged by the hardship she endures, but her eyes shine with hope - perhaps she will feel success.

Excerpt 1

Compare Zahra's facial expressions at 00:00:11 and 00:01:19, and throughout the animation.

► Students identify how Zahra's changing emotions, such as enthusiasm and hope, are represented in her through the animation.

Excerpt 2

Students view and analyse the still frame at 00:02:04.

► Students predict how Zahra will feel when she wakes under the tree, making connections between the hardships faced by Zahra and the sense of achievement she may feel when she realises her success.

Digital resource:

http://www.literacyshed.com/the-other-cultures-shed.html

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 6

Stage STAGE 2

Content links to text:

- Understand how characters, actions and events in imaginative texts can engage the reader or viewer. (EN2-7B)
- Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension. (EN2-10C)
- Justify interpretations of a text, including responses to characters, information and ideas, eg 'The main character is selfish because…'. (EN2-10C)
- Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts. (EN2-11D)

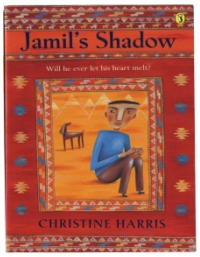
Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Jamil's Shadow by **Christine Harris**

Published by Puffin Books, 2001, Australia

Medium: Novel



Jamil has lost his parents and lives by himself with his herd of cattle in his village. He comes across a stray dog who befriends him.

An image of a Turkish rug represents Jamil's link to his mother and his culture. The author shares a glimmer of Turkish culture through the names of the different characters in the story. There is also reference to food and the social activities that happen in the village.

The author has described the actions and series of events in the story to develop Jamil's character. The thoughts and actions are shown through careful selection of verbs and adverbs. The use of flashbacks focuses on Jamil's link to his dead parents and the emotions he displays.

Excerpt 1

Pages 2 and 3:

"…Cattle were tough, strong. Jamil nodded. He would be strong, too, just like them."

► Students examine how the author has used figurative language to describe and develop the character.

Excerpt 2

Page 18 uses flashbacks to develop the character.

► Students can examine the use of the italics and font and their effect on the reader's perception of the character.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 7

Stage STAGE 2

Content links to text:

- Understand how characters, actions and events in imaginative texts can engage the reader or viewer. (EN2-7B)
- Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension. (EN2-10C)
- Justify interpretations of a text, including responses to characters, information and ideas eg 'The main character is selfish because...'. (EN2-10C)

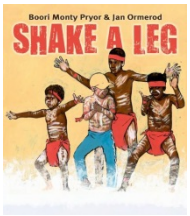
Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Shake a Leg by **Boori Monty Pryor** and **Jan Ormerod**

Published by Allen & Unwin, 2010, Australia

Medium: Picture book



Three hungry boys are curious about the pizza shop owner who speaks Italian and is Aboriginal. Bertie the owner shares traditional tales with the boys while making them pizza.

The setting of the story is in Far North Queensland but there is a connection between two cultures through the use of the different languages and visual images. The authors have used graphic images to show how the old cultural traditions can be blended into the modern way of life. Students can explore the concepts of family and looking beyond stereotypes and assumptions. Key messages of acceptance and active participation leads to greater understanding of other cultures.

Students analyse the use of dialogue between the characters. It is through the use of humour and the representation of the different families that resonates the author's key message. Food and stories are used to symbolise the significance of tradition and the way in which it brings people together. Connections can be made between the behaviours and the relationships that the author has depicted through the characters.

Excerpt 1

Page 4:

"..You're an Aboriginal? How come you're...not standing on one leg, leaning on a spear, looking for emu?"

► Students discuss and identify what assumptions and stereotypes are indicated in this extract

Excerpt 2

Pages 21 and 22:

"All you fellas watching, come up, join in...We've got the whole town dancing!"

► Students make connections with the printed text and the illustrations. Students explore what techniques have been used to depict the characters from the present along with the images of people from the past. They can analyse and discuss the symbolisms of the images and the authors' intention.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 8

Stage STAGE 2

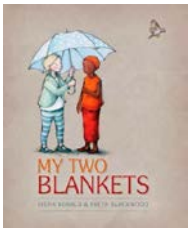
Content links to text:

- Understand how characters, actions and events in imaginative texts can engage the reader and viewer. (EN2-7B)
- Use images in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to enhance meaning. (EN2-7B)
- Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts. (EN2-11D)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

My Two Blankets by **Irena Kobald** and **Freya Blackwood** Published by Hardie Grant Egmont, 2014, Australia **Medium:** Picture book



Cartwheel and her auntie arrive in a new country. Cartwheel misses the familiarity of her old home and finds comfort under a blanket that represents her previous life. As Cartwheel begins to communicate with a girl in the park she develops a sense of belonging to her new country, represented by a new blanket.

This story enables students to develop an understanding of how people's identities are shaped by symbols and language. A blanket is used in the story and shows symbols in African weaving and sculptures. The author has used these in a metaphorical way that allows students to explore and establish the character's identity and culture.

There is a strong connection between the words and visuals that show the character's lack of sense of belonging and loss of identity. Language is a barrier and one of the main reasons for loss of identity. It is also used to create friendships and rebuild that sense of belonging. Understanding the character's emotions enables students to empathise with other people or children who are have found it difficult to settle in a new place.

Excerpt 1

Pages 5, 6, 7 and 8:

"Nobody spoke like I did…I felt like I wasn't me anymore….When I was at home, I wrapped myself in a blanket…It made me feel safe…"

► Students can identify the author's use of point of view, figurative language and the visual images and colour to develop a character.

Excerpt 2

Pages 17, 18 and pages 27, 28 show the two blankets.

► Students analyse the use of colour and the objects on both blankets. They empathise and connect with the character by discussing what things would they have on their blanket that connects them to their family and identity.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 9

Stage STAGE 3

Content links to text:

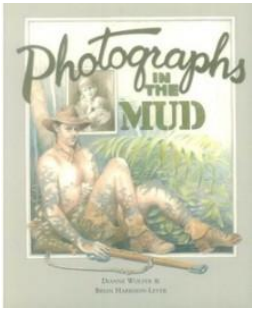
- Analyse strategies that authors use to influence readers. (EN3 - 5B)
- Recognise how the use of language and visual features can depict cultural assumptions in texts. (EN3- 8D)
- Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses. (EN3 - 8D)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Photographs in the Mud by **Dianne Wolfer** and **Brian Harrison-Lever** Published by Fremantle Press, 2007, AUS

Medium: Picture book



Jack and Hoshi are soldiers fighting on opposite sides of the war in 1942. The story shows the impact of war on Australian and Japanese soldiers and their loved ones.

The text explores the common tragedy of war across two different cultures, and these similarities are presented through parallelism. Cultural values and beliefs of the characters are depicted, and cultural assumptions are challenged as readers see how two people from different cultures relate regardless of language barriers.

Students can explore and analyse how the author and illustrator have created the two characters through the written and visual techniques. Illustrations give an insight into the characters' cultural values and attitudes towards war.

Excerpt 1

Pages 1 and 3 show parallels between Jack and Hoshi farewelling their families.

► Students can compare the illustrations and take note of any similarities and differences between the two characters and their respective cultures.

Excerpt 2

Pages 22 to 24:

"'I don't know what you're saying mate,' Jack muttered, 'but you don't sound like one of the vicious Japs you've been telling us about' … Hoshi didn't understand the words but just as he loved his own family, he knew that this Australian soldier loved the woman in the photograph."

► Students can explore how dialogue represents characters' perceptions of each other and how these perceptions change once they discover a common value.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 10

Stage STAGE 2

Content links to text:

- Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts. (EN3 - 8D)
- Analyse strategies that authors use to influence readers. (EN3 - 5B)
- Interpret events, situations and characters in texts. (EN3 - 7C)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Birthday Boy by **Sejong Park**

8 minutes

Produced by Andrew Gregory, 2004, Australia

Medium: Animation

Set in Korea in 1951, a young boy explores his desolate surroundings. He has a playful and innocent nature that conflicts with the harshness of his surroundings.

The animated film examines the impact of the Korean war from the viewpoint of a boy. Through the use of subtitles and visual representations, viewers gain insight into a war-affected Korean village. Regardless of the boy's culture, viewers are challenged to look beyond culture and understand the impact of war.

Students will examine the observable attributes of the character and explore how he represents his culture. The students will investigate what is important to the boy through his actions and attitudes.

Excerpt 1

00:00:00 to 00:01:40 :

► Students analyse the techniques used by the composer to convey this character's personality. They explore how the character's wide eyes, bright smile and playful singing portray him as innocent and worry-free.

Excerpt 2

From 00:05:00 :

► Students explore how the boy's role play and use of his imagination adds to their understanding of his experiences.

Digital resource:

http://www.literacyshed.com/the-other-cultures-shed.html

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 11

Stage STAGE 3

Content links to text:

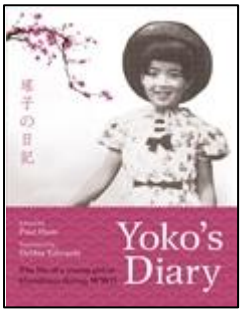
- Interpret events, situations and characters in texts. (EN3 -7C)
- Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts. (EN3 - 8D)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Yoko's Diary Edited by **Paul Ham** and translated by **Debbie Edwards** Published by Harper Collins, 2014, Australia

Medium: Non-fiction diary



Yoko Moriwaki was a 13 year old girl living in Hiroshima. Her diary was written as a school project and details her life as war affects the country. Her diary ended the night before the bombing of Hiroshima.

This diary records the details of Yoko's life as she has been mobilised by the war effort in Japan in 1945. Yoko mentions traditional Japanese activities, examined further through detailed explanations provided by the editor.

Through Yoko's thoughts and actions we gain an insight into her personality and identity. Students examine how the diary of Yoko and the foreword written by her family works to develop our understanding of her character.

Excerpt 1

On pages 79 and 109 the reader is provided with a summary of Yoko's daily rituals.

► Students can identify how they are similar to Yoko regardless of the cultural differences. Students can examine how a summary of her routines provides the reader with an understanding of her character.

Excerpt 2

Pages 70 and 75 refer to the other people in her life.

Page 70:

"I heard that the father of Hamada - san… passed away. I feel so sorry for her. Next time she comes to school I am going to go right over and comfort her."

► Students explore how Yoko perceives and reacts to other characters in her entries.

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CHARACTERISATION

TEXT 12

Stage STAGE 3

Content links to text:

- Analyse strategies that authors use to influence readers. (EN3 - 5B)
- Interpret events, situations and characters in texts. (EN3 - 7C)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how characters are constructed in text.
- Students develop an understanding of strategies used by authors and illustrators to develop character.
- Students identify with characters from a range of cultural backgrounds.

The Island by **Armin Greder**

Published by Allen & Unwin, 2008, Australia

Medium: Picture book

A foreigner is washed up on the shore of an island. Initially the islanders take care of him but their fear of his differences creates conflict within the community about the man's place in society.

The story shows how fear and misconception can be spread within a community, and how people create their own truths about the unknown and different. Treatment of the foreigner addresses how a lack of understanding and empathy can create an uncaring world.

Students can analyse the characterisation of the villagers and their attitudes toward the unknown. Greder uses haunting illustrations of the foreigner that evoke feelings of empathy and compassion towards the character. Students can explore how the author has effectively positioned his readers to feel for the character.

Excerpt 1

Pages 2 and 3 show a group of men with pitchforks:

"The people stared at him. They were puzzled. Why had he come here? What did he want? What should they do?"

"I am sure he wouldn't like it here, so far away from his own kind"

► Students analyse how the author has used language and illustrations to construct our perception of the villagers and the foreigner. They can examine how the actions of the villagers portray an uncaring, ignorant society void of any compassion or empathy.

Excerpt 2

Pages 11 and 12:

"The people grabbed him roughly and screamed at him. He tried to make them understand that he was hungry, that he hadn't eaten for days…"

► Students consider how the judgemental response of the villagers might symbolise a larger social issue.

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INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING PROJECT

This project supports teachers in focussing on the content and concepts in the NSW English K-10 Syllabus when programming, while addressing the 'general capability' of ***Intercultural Understanding*** in units of learning. General capabilities are embedded in the content of the English Syllabus. Through their choice of a diverse range of quality texts teachers are able to ensure that student learning involves high order thinking around the central concepts or 'big ideas' in English. All resources used in the project are available for loan from the Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre library.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The project demonstrates one example of how 'general capabilities' may be addressed through teaching English syllabus outcomes and content

CONCEPTUAL PROGRAMMING IN ENGLISH

Students respond to a diverse range of quality texts which build intercultural understanding, and model these in their own composing as they investigate English concepts such as:

- **Characterisation**
- **Representation**
- **Perspectives**
- **Interpretation**

THE HENRY PARKES EQUITY RESOURCE CENTRE LIBRARY

- The library loans resources to all DEC educators in NSW
- Texts used in the Intercultural Understanding Project, as well as interactive kits and professional learning resources are available free of charge from the library

Centre contact details:
Mimika Avenue,
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Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre

ADOBE CONNECT RECORDING: https://connect.schools.nsw.edu.au/p6eelyjo11w/

REPRESENTATION TEXT SET

Text title	Medium
EARLY STAGE 1	
• Why elephant has a trunk	DVD
• My Mother's sari	Picture book
• Celebrations of the world	Non-fiction big book
STAGE 1	
• The colour of home	Picture book
• The tale of the ten suns	Animation
• Kids on our block	Picture book and CD
STAGE 2	
• Dragon dance	Poem
• Mother tongue	Animated short film
• Family	Non-fiction book
• As I grew older	Picture book
STAGE 3	
• Whale rider	Film
• Missing her	Short film
• Hana's suitcase	Novel

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

This project was completed in collaboration with: the NSW DEC Equity and Multicultural team, English K-10 team, Australian Curriculum – English K-10 team and the following teachers from metropolitan, rural and regional schools:

Eloise Dews – Queanbeyan PS
Julie Grazotis – Banks PS
Justine Holst – Baulkham Hills North PS
Lesley Lamb – Timbumburi PS
Janine Roberson – Abermain PS

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 1

Stage EARLY STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Respond to literature and a variety of other texts from a range of storytellers and cultures, using picture books and online sources. (ENe-11D)
- Replicate the rhythms and sound patterns in stories, rhymes, songs and poems from a range of cultures. (ENe-1A)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

How Elephant Got His Nose from The Story Spinner Series: Stories from around the world, Lower Primary

Medium: DVD

An Indian story teller presents this traditional tale explaining how a community of animals sought justice against a rude elephant.

Traditionally cultural groups have used oral storytelling to share traditions and reinforce values.

The text represents the concept of intercultural understanding through choosing an older person and an elephant as central characters. Indian culture is represented by these two significant characters.

Excerpt 1

The frames between 00: 01:00 and 00:01:33 detail how the elephant talks to the other animals.

The narrator says:
"All day everyday elephant would go around teasing all the other animals that their noses weren't as cute as his."

► Students discuss why the story places the elephant as the main character (symbol). What does the elephant represent in Indian culture?

Excerpt 2

The frames between 00:04:47 and 00:04:53 tell how the wise old man tries to help the elephant feel better.

The wise old man says:

"Don't worry, don't worry, they look quite nice and it's like having an extra arm or leg."

The elephant says:

"We don't want an extra arm of a leg."

The wise old man replies:

"I bet they are strong."

► Students list the characteristics that the old man possesses that make him wise (patient, problem solver, experienced). Students consider the symbolism of the old man as representative of Indian culture and societal values.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 2

Stage EARLY STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences. (ENe-11D)
- Read and discuss stories that reflect students' social and cultural groups cultures. (ENe-11D)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

My Mother's Sari **(Malayalam-English Edition)** by **Sandhya Rao** and **Nina Sabnani**, published by NorthSouth, 2006, USA

Medium: Picture book

Photographs, drawing and bilingual text combine to depict the adventures Indian children have when playing with their mother's sari.

It is through the eyes of children that the text engages and connects the readers to Indian culture. Beliefs, values and attitudes are symbolised through the use of colour, traditional clothing and language. Readers observe traditional practices and can embrace the sense of fun and comfort that comes from the closeness of family.

The text represents the concept of intercultural understanding as the illustrations reveal the importance of the sari as a symbol of identity, family and togetherness.

Excerpt 1

Pages 6 and 7:

"It fills the air with colours when I dance and sing."

► Students explore the use of colour and design as representative of the traditional dress of India. Students discuss how the descriptive language makes them feel about the connection that the child has with her mother and the Indian culture.

Excerpt 2

Pages 14 and 15 show a child wrapped up in the saris. The text reads:

"Then when I am tired, it wraps itself around me."

► Students identify the words (tired, wraps around) to discuss how the clothing brings peace and comfort to the child. The visual clues on these pages represent the significance of the sari in all aspects of this child's life.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 3

Stage EARLY STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Share responses to aspects of a text that relate to their own life. (ENe-11D)
- Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences. (ENe-11D)

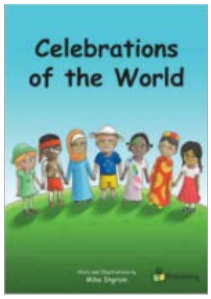
Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Celebrations of the World by **Mike Ingram**

Published by Oz Publishing, 2013, Australia

Medium: Non-fiction big book



The text invites students to observe and relate to the symbols, colours, costumes, food and activities of cultural celebrations. The text represents what is valuable to a culture.

The selected illustrations represent the practices and customs that define the beliefs of each cultural group, developing an appreciation of what it is that culture offers society, community and family.

Excerpt 1

Pages 10 and 11 show an Aboriginal corroboree.

The text reads:

"A corroboree is an Aboriginal gathering of song and dance."

► *Students identify how cultures are represented through dance and music.*

Excerpt 2

Page 18 shows children from a range of cultures holding hands.

The text reads:

"There are lots of ways to celebrate. How do you celebrate?"

► Students explore familiar and unfamiliar symbols of culture demonstrated by the images. They discuss how different cultures are shared and connected within communities.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 4

Stage STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Discuss how depictions of characters in print and images reflect the contexts in which they were created. (EN1-11D)
- Recognise simple ways meaning in texts is shaped by structure and perspective. (EN1-11D)
- Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences. (EN1-11D)

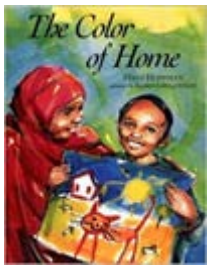
Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

The Colour of Home by **Mary Hoffman**

Published by Frances Lincoln, 2012, United Kingdom

Medium: Picture book



Hassan's family flee war-torn Somalia and he goes to school in a new and unfamiliar land. He expresses his experiences and longing for his homeland through painting with colour; the medium that helps Hassan to see a brighter future.

Somalian culture focuses on family and extended family/clan groups. Through the visual impact of this story, students can identify this aspect of rural family life. The traditional dress and religion are representative of this culture.

Students can interpret the colours used in the illustrations to engage more deeply with the feelings and emotions that represent the mood and tone of the text.

Excerpt 1

"Our new country seemed all cold and grey, And the flat… is grey too. [Hassan painted his home with]. a blue sky, yellow sun…"

► Students analyse how the use of sombre tones represent Hassan's emotions in his new country. Students can then compare and contrast this with the way that Hassan describes his homeland.

Excerpt 2

"We had no luggage, only my father's prayer mat and qu'ran, hidden in Naima's bag of nappies."

► Students focus on how the inclusion of what the family chose to take with them shows that the text reinforces religious and cultural values.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 5

Stage STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created. (EN1-11D)
- Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experience. (EN1-11D)
- Identify features of texts from a range of cultures, including language patterns and style of illustration. (EN1-11D)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

The Tale of the Ten Suns by **Oded Levy and Barak Drori**

4 minutes

Published 2012

Medium: Animation

An animated story depicting a traditional Chinese folktale using the brushstroke art technique.

Traditional folktales of China generally sought to maintain societal hierarchy and roles while explaining how and why things occurred in the natural world. This process of reinforcing social values and attitudes from Chinese culture is evident in this simple version of an ancient story.

The text reproduces a version of traditional Chinese brushstroke art to communicate the authenticity of the tale. The sombre music and muted tones of the animation help to convey the importance of this story and other similar stories in representing cultural attitudes and beliefs.

Excerpt 1

Chinese writing and music.

► Students examine the significance of the Chinese brush technique and the background music as representing elements of Chinese culture and heritage.

Excerpt 2

00:01:11 : The Chinese people are represented as living in poor circumstances in a harsh landscape.

00:02:26 : The Emperor seated under a throne canopy.

00:03:00 : Yi, the Archer as strong and obedient to the Emperor.

► Identify how the depiction of these characters convey the message of hierarchy and roles in Chinese culture.

Digital resource:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEzgAiIV0zM

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 6

Stage STAGE 1

Content links to text:

- Identify, reproduce and experiment with rhythmic, sound and word patterns in poems, chants, rhymes and songs. (EN1-1A)
- Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences. (EN1-11D)
- Identify features of texts from a range of cultures, including language patterns and style of illustration. (EN1-11D)
- Make connections between different methods of communication, eg Standard Australian English, Aboriginal English, home language, sign language and body language). (EN1-6B)

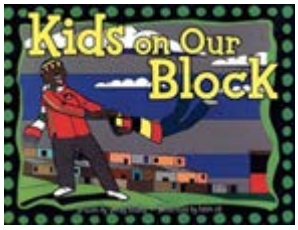
Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Kids on our Block by **Wendy Notley**

Published by Blake Education, 2009, Australia

Medium: Picture book and CD



The lyrics of the song are also the words in this Aboriginal picture book, where Children from the local community tell their stories.

Aboriginal community and cultural identity are evident in the language and illustrations in this book. The narratives are told in the storytelling tradition of Aboriginal culture.

The artist's representation of symbols and traditional Aboriginal art forms and the choice of colours and vectors explain a connection with community.

Excerpt 1

Page 14:

"Big mob together…a deadly sight! yarnin' up on the lawn."

► Students can identify and discuss how the author uses Aboriginal English and how it makes them feel when they are using these terms.

Excerpt 2

Page 14:

► Explore how the contrast of the pictures and the words in the song helps students to understand the meaning of the Aboriginal language.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 7

Stage STAGE 2

Content links to text:

- Draw connections between personal experiences and the world of texts, and share responses with others. (EN2-11D)
- Discuss the nature and effects of some language devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader's reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose. (EN2-8B)
- Create texts that adapt language features and patterns encountered in literary texts, for example characterisation, rhyme, rhythm, mood, music, sound effects and dialogue. (EN2-2A)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Dragon Dance by **Max Fatchen** Available in *Let's Celebrate: Festival Poems*, John Foster, published by Oxford University Press, 1989, United Kingdom

Medium: Poem

This poem describes Chinese New Year celebrations from the perspective of an observer.

Through this poem children will be introduced to a traditional cultural dance associated with Chinese New Year. It will enable the students to discuss the significance of religious and cultural celebrations, and provide opportunities to research the symbolism of the dragon in Chinese culture.

The descriptive language and beat of the poem represent the movement and excitement of the dance and the celebration of Chinese New Year.

Excerpt 1

"A Chinese dragon's in the street
And dancing on its Chinese feet
With fearsome head and golden scale
And twisting its ferocious tail."

► Students can consider how the composer's perspective represents the Chinese culture and the significance of the dance.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 8

Stage STAGE 2

Content links to text:

- Explore the effect of choices when framing an image, placement of elements in the image, and salience on composition of still and moving images in a range of types of texts. (EN2-8B)
- Respond to short films, documentaries and multimedia texts that express familiar and new aspects of the broader world. (EN2-11D)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Mother Tongue by **Susan Danta**

7 minutes

Published 2003

Medium: Animated short film

Conveyed through a series of vignettes recorded daily for a year, this film describes moving from Korea to Australia and learning to speak English.

Through the use of soft and simple images, the film effectively represents the loss the young Korean girl Hong Gyong feels first the physical absence of her father, then the loss of her native tongue. Students will be able to empathise with others in a range of contexts and understand the importance of communication.

Through the composer's use of visual literacy techniques, students will feel a connection with Hong Gyong. Students will discuss how the the composer has represented her feelings about the importance of respecting cultural traditions whilst learning about and fitting into a new culture.

Excerpt 1

03:49 to 04:03

"I have no memory of these voices my mother recorded for my father. They have been packed away by the distance of time: mementos of a journey still being taken."

► Students explore how the filmmaker has chosen to represent her fading memory of life in Korea. Discuss how the background music and soundtrack further represent the composer's emotions.

► Students identify how the composer has represented the transition through time from one culture to another and how this represents her sense of loss.

http://vimeo.com/44786621

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 9

Stage STAGE 2

Content links to text:

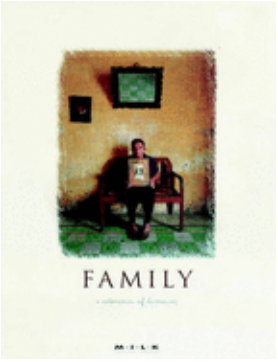
- Discuss aspects of literature from a range of cultures to explore common experiences and ideas as well as recognising difference. (EN2 –11D)
- Explore the effect of choices when framing an image, placement of elements in the image, and salience on composition of still and moving images in a range of types of text. (EN2-8B)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Family by **James McBride** Published by William Morrow, 2001, United States

Medium: Non-fiction book



This is a pictorial journal depicting the concept of family via photographs of peoples of various ethnic backgrounds and nationalities.

One of the many similarities between cultures around the world is the extended family unit. The role of the older members of the family is to guide and teach younger members. The experience, wisdom and cultural knowledge of the elders is passed on through storytelling and demonstrating cultural practice.

These photographs provide an insight into cultural practice in a number of countries. Students are able to identify the manner in which people around the world connect with each other and how children are nurtured and taught different cultural norms. Students deepen their understanding by reflecting on how these practices maintain culture.

Excerpt 1

Page 135: Ladakh, Northern India

The deep attachment between child and great-grandmother is represented by the old woman's arms wrapped around the child. Her cheek is pressed against the child's head. The vector lines travel from their faces to the joined hands.

► Students explore how this photograph enhances their understanding of the value placed on family in this culture.

Excerpt 2

Page 96: Imbabura Indian family at Lake San Pablo, Ecuador

Body language in this photograph shows conviviality and highlights the strength of the extended family unit. The shared practice of this daily ritual affirms that this aspect of female culture in the Imbabura Indian tribe is maintained.

► Students explore how the status of the women and their roles within the society are represented by the light and shade, placement, and framing used in this photograph.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 10

Stage STAGE 2

Content links to text:

- Discuss ways in which spoken language differs from written language and how spoken language varies according to different audiences, purposes and contexts. (EN2-6B)
- Understand that languages have different written and visual communication systems, different oral traditions and different ways of constructing meaning. (EN2-6B)

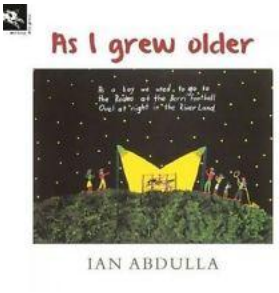
Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

As I Grew Older by **Ian Abdulla**

Published by Omnibus Books, 1993, Australia

Medium: Picture book



This is a collection of contemporary paintings by an Indigenous man, Ian Abdulla, in which he retells stories of his childhood.

The text provides an opportunity for students to explore common experiences and understand that individuals from all cultural groups have their own stories. Students are able to recognise the oral nature of Aboriginal Australian languages.

The handwritten text at the top of the painting is written in Aboriginal English and provides the context that supports the detailed image. This enables students to make connections between Standard Australian English and different methods of communication to reinforce cultural values, traditions and practices.

Excerpt 1

In the twelfth painting:

"...river language and RIver Nunga ... white man's language."

► Students consider the significance of Aboriginal dialect in representing the experiences of an Indigenous man. Students examine the use of the handwritten text as a verbal representation of the painting and how this highlights the oral nature of Aboriginal languages.

Excerpt 2

In the sixteenth painting, the social distance of the participants reinforces the notion of Indigenous families working together for a common goal. The images are framed within the banks of the Murray River, reinforcing that this is a *River Nunga* story.

► Students examine the way in which the connection between characters and physical place is represented in the text.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 11

Stage STAGE 3

Content links to text:

- Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships. (EN3-1A)
- Recognise how the use of language and visual features can depict cultural assumptions in texts. (EN3-8D)

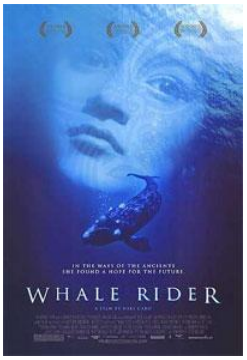
Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Whale Rider by **Niki Caro**

Produced by South Pacific Pictures, released 2002

Medium: Film



This film shows how a Maori family is bound by cultural beliefs. The traditional Maori legend about the arrival of Paikea, the founder of New Zealand, is told.

Ancestral stories are cultural rituals which perpetuate traditions, maintaining respect and acknowledging heritage.

This film represents storytelling as an important social institution in Maori culture as it teaches people belief systems and the guiding principles of personal behaviour. Elders tell ancestral stories to build conceptual bridges between a person's own experience and new knowledge. Sometimes storytellers use analogies to build these bridges.

Excerpt 1

00:16:19 to 00:17:45 :

"... Each one of these threads is one of your ancestors all joined together and strong all the way back to that whale of yours."

Koro uses an analogy about rope to teach Pai about their ancestry. The rope symbolises the ancestral lives of the Maori community. During his explanation of the story of Paikea, Koro gives a speech in the Maori language then translates it as:

"...Weave together the threads of Paikea so that our line remains strong."

► Students examine the significance of metaphor in representing aspects of Maori culture. They also consider how the use of Maori language assists in representing the experiences as belonging to this culture.

Excerpt 2

The sequence is filmed as a close up shot of the two characters with the sounds and sight of the ocean in the background. This represents the connection between nature and the Maori culture.

► Students examine how framing and sound are used to represent the connection between Maori people and elements of the natural world.

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 12

Stage STAGE 3

Content links to text:

- Think critically about aspects of texts such as ideas and events. (EN3-7C)
- Recognise how the use of language and visual features can depict cultural assumptions in texts. (EN3-8D)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Missing Her by **Michael Weisler**

Produced for Tropfest Australia, 2011

Medium: Short film

This short film follows the story of a young Thai boy, Henry, who moves to Melbourne after being adopted by an Australian couple. It focuses on the challenges Henry and his new parents have with communication at a time when they are all struggling to adjust to their new lives.

The filmmaker uses visual imagery to represent Henry's sense of isolation, his search to maintain a connection to his biological mother and his inability to communicate his needs to his new mother. The viewer can identify factors of intercultural communication and how misunderstandings occur.

The use of language in the film represents the difficulties the child and his parents have with communication. Subtitles allow the viewer to understand what the child is saying, while the parents don't have the same luxury. The filmmaker uses scenes in the film to represent situations where the parents are behaving in ways that are culturally and traditionally normal for them, yet the child is uncomfortable with these foreign practices.

Excerpt 1

00:56 to 01:08

In the scene where the family is travelling to the airport to leave Thailand, the taxi driver jokes with the child about his new Mum looking like a buffalo. The mother doesn't realise that the joke is at her expense

► Students analyse how the filmmaker has represented the differences between the two cultures through the use of subtitles and choice of dialogue.

Excerpt 2

02:18 to 03:28

The film shows the boy's mother running him a bath. When she has left the room, he puts his hand into the water and draws it back in shock to feel that the water is warm.

► Students examine how the filmmaker has used visual images to represent the differences between the boy's culture and his new world

Digital resource:

http://vimeo.com/28604474

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REPRESENTATION

TEXT 13

Stage STAGE 3

Content links to text:

- Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts. (EN3-8D)
- Analyse and evaluate the way that inference is used in a text to build understanding in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts. (EN3-3A)
- Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text. (EN3-3A)

Key ideas:

- Students examine how composers represent aspects of different cultures, such as values, traditions and practices, in texts.
- Students consider texts that function as part of a culture to reinforce values, traditions and practices.

Hana's Suitcase by Karen Levine Published by Albert Whitman & Company, 2002, United States

Medium: Novel

When Hana's suitcase arrives in a small Holocaust education centre in Japan, the museum's director sets off on a journey to find out the story of Hana's life. The novel follows the dual stories of the museum director's quest and Hana's childhood.

Through the representation of Hana's experiences as a Jewish Czechoslovakian during the Second World War, readers will be confronted by Hana's enforced isolation from her friends, her parents and ultimately her brother, George. This will enable students to develop empathy for Hana and build a deeper intercultural understanding of her situation.

Because the narrative follows Fumiko's attempt to learn about Hana, the story itself is a representation of the importance of intercultural understanding. The inclusion of primary sources such as photographs, artworks and documents to represent aspects of Hana's culture create a vivid image for the reader. This is contrasted with images representing Fumiko's modern day experiences, further highlighting the cultural divide between Fumiko and Hana's world..

Excerpt 1

On page 4 the author lists the things that could be purchased in the town's general store:

"…buttons, jam, oil lamps and rakes, sleigh bells…"

On page 5 she goes on to describe family evenings:

"Sometimes George was called upon to play his violin."

► Students can examine how a Canadian author has represented life for a Jewish person in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s through inference. Students can discuss how this representation may differ if written from Hana's perspective.

Excerpt 2

Pages 8 and 9:

These chapters include a photograph of Hana's childhood home in Nove Mesto and one of Fumiko's museum in Japan. The new chapter begins with:

"Back in her office in Tokyo, half a world away in Japan and more than half a century later…"

► Students can examine how the author has used alternating chapters on Hana and Fumiko to represent the differences between their situations, and analyse how the images in the book help to communicate this.

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INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING PROJECT

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INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The project demonstrates one example of how 'general capabilities' may be addressed through teaching English syllabus outcomes and content

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Students respond to a diverse range of quality texts which build intercultural understanding, and model these in their own composing as they investigate English concepts such as:

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THE HENRY PARKES EQUITY RESOURCE CENTRE LIBRARY

- The library loans resources to all DEC educators in NSW
- Texts used in the Intercultural Understanding Project, as well as interactive kits and professional learning resources are available free of charge from the library

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PERSPECTIVES TEXT SET

Text title	Medium
STAGE 4	
• Home and away	Picture book
• Hey, I've got a racist flu	Poetry anthology
• Father	Animated short film
• Down river: the Wilcannia Mob story	Non-fiction picture book
• Milly's secret	Novella
• Just the skin you're livin' in	Graphic novel
• The German boy	Short story
• The relative advantage of learning my language	Memoir
• Fly lie	Short stories

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

This project was completed in collaboration with: the NSW DEC Equity and Multicultural team, English K-10 team, Australian Curriculum – English K-10 team and the following teachers from metropolitan, rural and regional schools:

Emma Bott – Richmond HS
Madelaine Dawes – Chatswood HS
Kate Lambert – Blakehurst HS

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 1

Stage 4

Outcomes: **EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D**

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

Home and Away by **John Marsden** and **Matt Ottley** Published by Hachette Australia, 2008, Australia

Medium: Picture book

The idea that this "could happen to you" is effectively conveyed through an inversion of the refugee narrative; the text documents the increasing dislocation of an Australian family as they give up their Western ideals and board a boat to escape their home country.

This book encourages students to consider the fact that, regardless of cultural background and nationality, everyone wants safety, people to love and above all a home. It is about the common values of humanity.

Told in the form of a diary from the perspective of an unnamed fifteen-year-old, the picture book allows a teenage audience to imagine themselves in this role. The loss of western values is portrayed through the text and images as the diary mirrors the loss of material possessions as well as describing the emotions associated with tragic family loss. It presents us with both the perspective of refugees and our own perspective in the first world.

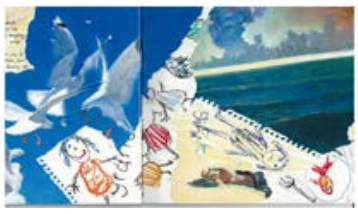
Excerpt 1

Pages 1 and 2 show the image of the family taken on a digital camera and the bright sky in the background. In the top right hand corner a mouse cursor appears to demonstrate that the diary has been written using a computer. The text introduces the family and the key characteristics that make them typically Western.

"Mum: a rehab counsellor…Dad: driver for Elgas…Me: want to travel and be vet…Clare: just got braces"

► Students can consider how a perspective on Western life is being presented through visual symbolism of the camera screen and positioning of the reader.

Excerpt 2



Pages 15 and 16 provide stark contrast of the perspective of the family's life before the war. The collage style image represents the life on an asylum seeker boat, the family's state of limbo and a change in values.

"Grandma died about forty five minutes before we got on the boat"

► Students can consider the ways a change in perspective is represented and how this might challenge their own perspectives. Teacher may focus on the symbolism of drawings, relationship between text and illustration and contrast.

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 2

Stage 4

Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

Hey, I've Got a Racist Flu by **Xuan Duong**

Published by Integration, 2002, Australia

Medium: Poetry anthology

This collection of poems includes the many voices of Vietnamese school children growing up in Australia, and detail their experiences of racial discrimination.

The poems are composed from the victims' perspective and convey the confusion, frustration, resentment, anger, fear, despair, hopelessness and at times hatred generated as a result of racism. Most poems are inspired as a result of a personal situation the Vietnamese composer has encountered. However, other poems have been inspired by racial and multicultural issues and experiences that have happened to others from a variety of cultures.

Many of these poems are composed from the perspective of the victims of discrimination, and they draw on techniques such as emotive language to communicate their feelings. Some poems also explore the origins of racism as well as what it means to be 'Australian'.

Excerpt 1

Page 19: 'The Media Gang'

This poem effectively explores how society's perception of certain cultures and race are perpetuated through the media. It presents the role of journalists through the eyes of the people they might seek to stereotype or vilify.

"Hungry the journo voyeuristic and sensationalist news for sale"

► Students can examine whose perspective is offered in the poem and how this is constructed. Teacher may focus on the emotive language used to affect the audience.

Excerpt 2

Page 199: 'My Home'

This poem conveys the confusion associated with what it means to be Vietnamese Australian as well as people's perceptions of what it actually means to be Australian.

"She hands me an overcoat to wear over my cultural costume so I look Australian."

► Students can examine the perspective offered by the narrator about what it means to be Australian. They compare how this meets with their own perspective and consider how this shapes their understanding of the text's meaning.

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 3

Stage 4

Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

Father by **Sebastian Danta** 9 minutes Produced by Samantha Jennings, 2010, Australia

Medium: Animated short film

This film is about a boy who struggles to understand his strange silent father. His father is a Lithuanian immigrant who has become an emotional refugee in his own home due to cultural misunderstandings.

This text cleverly conveys cultural differences and the difficulties faced by many immigrants who have raised children in their adopted country. In this animation, a father who emigrated from Lithuania is struggling to communicate with his children who have been born in Australia. Told from the son's perspective, he eventually comes to accept and appreciate his father for the man he is and the experiences he has had.

The story is told in hindsight, through use of voice over, from the perspective of the son. This provides students with a unique insight into the son's changing perspective on his father's strange ways. Students from language backgrounds other than English are likely to identify with the experience of feeling disconnected from the culture of their parents.

Excerpt 1

00:13 to 00:39

"I've never told my father that I love him. And as a kid I didn't. He was strange and silent."

00:54 to 01:16

"He looked different…when he talked my friends couldn't understand him because of his Lithuanian accent. They always used to ask me what he was saying but I didn't understand him either."

► *Students can explore how the composer uses first-person personal anecdotes to establish the perspective of the son.*

Excerpt 2

Recurring motif of eyes and reflection.

► Students can analyse how visuals assist in representing the son's shifting perspective of his father.

http://vimeo.com/27962188

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 4

Stage 4

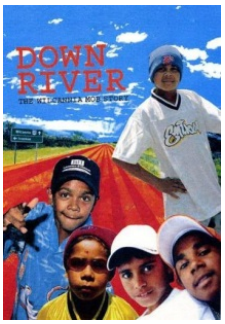
Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

Down River: the Wilcannia Mob Story by **Melinda Collie-Holmes Published by Kargaru Productions, 2008, Australia**

Medium: Non-fiction picture book



This multimodal picture book explores the life, culture and musical successes of The Wilcannia Mob famous for their 2002 song 'Down River'.

The book gives the responder an understanding of the unique perspectives of youth living in the Wilcannia region. The responder also learns about Indigenous culture through learning about community life, spiritual connections with the landscape, the river that runs through the town, and the importance of music within Indigenous culture.

The book uses a combination of images, interview transcripts, newspaper articles and song lyrics to successfully give the responder a clear understanding of the unique perspective of Indigenous youth living in the Wilcannia region and the Barkindji people. The text is also successful at educating responders of the limited opportunities residents of the Wilcannia region face. Students are able to compare their own individual perspective with the children of the Wilcannia region.

Excerpt 1
Page 10:

*"**Kevin**: It was good growing up out here. It wasn't the big city, you know what I mean? And now? What do the young people do now?*

***Gladys**: There's nothing much for them.*

***Kevin**: The spirit of the community dies out when I was a teenager, about 15 years ago. People and families left, families that organised different things, that were into a lot of sporting, did a lot of good for the community, moved on, change of life, and when they left the spirit went with 'em. It didn't stay."*

► Students can examine how the children's perspective of living in Wilcannia is demonstrated through a combination of words and images.

Excerpt 2
Page 26:

*"**Day Four: Homebake***

The boys walked back-stage and heads turned. Everyone wanted to see the Barkandji Boys.

***MC Wire**: Check that out. You've got Superheist wanting to get a photo with the Barkandji Boys, not the other way around. The boys didn't even know who they were!*

***Wally**: We had our own tent!*

***Lendal**: I wasn't shy to go out there.*

***MC Wire**: Go out there and represent, boys, everybody's here to check you out. Go out there and don't be shame, no shame!*

***Brendan**: This is your day. From sitting in the lounge room, now we're standing in front of 20,000 people. Let's go out there and tell them what Wilcannia is all about."*

► Students can examine how the children's changing circumstances altered their perspectives, and how this is represented through their dialogue.

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 5

Stage 4

Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

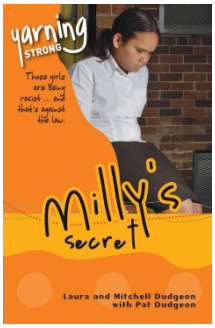
Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

Milly's Secret by Laura and Mitchell Dudgeon

Published by Oxford University Press Australia, 2011, Australia

Medium: Novella



Milly's life begins to spin out of control when she is targeted by racist bullies at her new high school. She wants the bullies to stop singling her out, but she fears she will face more racism and bullying if she tells anyone.

Milly's experiences with her peers and her new school environment explore the difficulties that children from diverse cultural, religious and language groups, such as Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders, might experience. Readers are also able to learn about the perspective of Indigenous communities, including the importance of kinship relations, community life and respect for elders within the region.

This short novel deals with the concept of perspectives by exploring the feelings and emotions felt by Indigenous youth. It captures the unique perspective of an Indigenous Australian who suffers the racist opinions of her peers. Dual narration enables the responder to not only understand Milly's perspective, but also that of her brother who observes the effects of racist bullying from a distance. Narration is used to highlight the cruel taunts Milly suffers as well as the heart-warming conversations she has with her brother where she discusses the racist bullying and possible solutions. The story is interjected with excerpts from her own diary and these give the reader a personal insight into the pain and suffering felt by Milly.

Excerpt 1

Page 18:

"The next day, Milly walked into the girls' toilets at school and saw a small square of graffiti on the wall next to the mirror:

Milly Moo smells like poo

Sits in the dirt and goes boohoo

Throughout the day Milly felt that everyone was looking at her. When she walked past the other girls they rubbed their eyes and pretended to cry, making boohoo noises. She felt sick and ashamed, as if she could burst into tears at any moment. Finally she could not bear it any longer. She went to the school nurse, saying she was sick and needed to go home."

► Students can examine how language has been used to communicate the emotional perspective of the victims of racism.

Excerpt 2

Page 18:

"Jack felt sorry for Milly but – and this seemed strange – he was ashamed too. He knew those names like "coon" were meant for both of them, because of who they were. Those names covered everyone in his family, his mum, Dad, Faye, Dakota, Nan, his uncles, aunties, everyone. It was like the world did not like them because they were Aboriginal."

► Students can examine how omniscient narration allows the composer to provide the reader with insight into the impact of bullying on individuals' perceptions of culture.

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 6

Stage 4

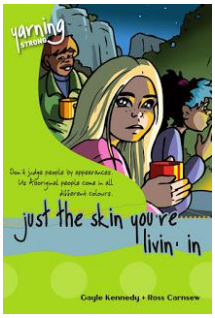
Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

Just the Skin You're Livin' in by **Gayle Kennedy, Ross Carnsew**. Published by Oxford University Press Australia, 2011

Medium: Graphic novel



Tahnee seems happy at her new school until the colour of her skin causes her peers to question her Aboriginality.

The text deals with cultural clashes and misunderstandings about appearance and identity. When Tahnee seeks advice from her community, we learn about traditional Aboriginal family structures, including kinship relations and the influence of elders on community life.

The text enables the responder to understand not only Tahnee's unique Aboriginal perspective, but also the perspective of her peers who act out of naivety, rather than hatred. Students can explore how the composer has used language to convey the tension between Tahnee and her classmates. They can consider how their own cultural experiences enable them to understand the text and engage with the protagonist.

Excerpt 1

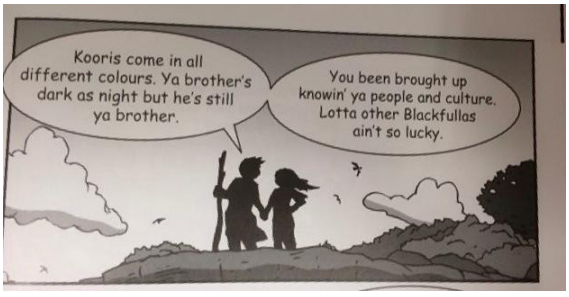
Page 5:

Tahnee describes living with her family within her Aboriginal community.

► Students can analyse how the combination of images and first-person narration informs our understanding of Tahnee's place within her community.

Excerpt 2

Page 1:



► Students can discuss how language is used to represent perspective.

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 7

Stage 4

Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

The German Boy by **Ron Butlin**

from **The New Paper Families – An Anthology of Short Stories** compiled by **Richard Baines.** Published by Cambridge University Press, 2010, Great Britain

Medium: Short story

A man reflects on his friendship with a schoolmate, Klaus, the German boy. By remembering the difficulties that Klaus experienced as a new student in a foreign school, the narrator comes to understand how hard it must have been as an outsider in that environment.

While he struggles with the realities of his new family situation, Klaus is also alienated by his peers and ostracised due to his fair appearance and thick accent. This text presents both the experiences of Klaus, who is constantly reminded that his cultural differences make him an outsider, but also the perspective of the narrator, who reflects on the sadness and isolation Klaus must have felt.

Students can examine how the narrator's perspective on Klaus is informed by his observations, how this has changed over time, and how the composer has represented his new perspective as one of regret. They can also consider how accurately the text reflects their own perspective and experiences of intolerance.

Excerpt 1

page 106:

The author uses flashbacks to highlight the impression that Klaus made on him.

"He said that he and I would be friends – amici sumus. That was nearly twenty years ago.

I should really get down to some work. Normally I work hard, very hard."

► Students can examine how the use of flashbacks informs our understanding of the narrator's past and present perspective on Klaus.

Excerpt 2

page 108:

Klaus demonstrates his pain and frustration by refusing to speak English in class.

"He told Klaus to sit down and he wouldn't. To be quiet and he wouldn't. To stand in the corner and he wouldn't. 'Zwei Minuten Zwei Minuten…' Tears were running down his cheeks and his voice was choking but he couldn't stop. Finally he was taken to the sick room."

► Students can explore the difficulties that Klaus faced as an outsider and consider why this outburst of emotion has remained with the narrator. They can also consider how Klaus' dialogue represents his frustrated perspective as an outsider.

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 8

Stage 4

Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

The Relative Advantages of Relearning my Language by Amy Choi. Published in The Age in 2002, Australia

Medium: Memoir

Amy Choi's contribution to this collection of memories titled 'Growing up Asian in Australia' looks at her experiences as a teenager resisting her family and cutting ties with her cultural heritage.

This text shows how people can feel stretched across cultural divides within their family. It explores the many pressures felt by children growing up in a culture different from that of their family. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds can identify with cultural practices changing over time through their immediate family.

Written in first person, the text offers very direct insight into the perspective of a cultural 'outsider'. Students can deconstruct how this perspective is achieved through anecdotes and comparisons. Attention should be given to the changing tone of the narrator as her perspective shifts from one of embarassment to one of pride.

Excerpt 1

Paragraph 1:

Amy feels the generational and language gap between herself and her grandfather as a teen, but regrets that she didn't connect with him when she had the opportunity

"I was never particularly kind to my grandfather. He was my mother's father and he lived with us when I was a teenager."

► Students can examine how the memoir represents the speaker's changing perspective on her culture as she matured.

Excerpt 2

Paragraph 12:

"The waiter told my mum with a sigh that his own kids could barely string a sentence together in Chinese."

► Students examine how the opinions of minor characters help to construct a generalised perspective of Chinese culture in Australia and contrast this with the attitudes expressed by Amy.
Available at:
http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/07/10/1026185063691.html

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PERSPECTIVES

TEXT 9

Stage 4

Outcomes: EN4-1A, EN4-3B, EN4-7D, EN4-8D

Key ideas:

- Students explore the ways in which texts present perspectives from different cultures.
- Students consider the cultural background of the composer and how his or her perspective might shape the text.
- Students consider how aspects of their own cultural background might influence construction of text and meaning.

Fly lie by Dominic Wan

from The New Paper Families – An Anthology of Short Stories compiled by Richard Baines. Published by Cambridge University Press, 2010, Great Britain

Medium: Short stories

This collection of stories is a critical look at how we perceive other cultures through stereotypes. They focus on the author, an Australian born Chinese man, and his experiences of Chinese culture throughout his childhood, from working in the local Chinese restaurant to his journey to Hong Kong with his best friend.

Even in the ironically cringe-worthy title, this text exposes the experiences and expectations of a superficial engagement with Chinese culture. Students could discover how our basic assumptions could unfairly categorise people and that unfamiliar cultural practices are often appropriated and adapted for Western palates. Fly Lie demonstrates how we construct our own cultural identity as well as other people's perceptions and assumptions about a particular culture through stereotypes.

By presenting the perspective and experiences of a Chinese boy growing up in Australia, the texts demonstrates how narrow our views and understanding of other cultures can be. In this way, we are confronted with the assumptions that underpin our own perspective and are challenged to accept that culture is far more complex than the simple associations we sometimes make.

Excerpt 1

Page 148:

Dominic is taking his best friend to visit his grandparents in Hong Kong now that they have finished school.

"'Spring rolls are authentic Chinese, everyone knows that.'

How could I forget that Spring Rolls are the culinary symbol for a five thousand year old culture!"

► Students can examine how the narrator's ironic tone is used to question generalisations about culture.

Excerpt 2

Page 149:

Dominic goes to work at his Uncle's Chinese restaurant one summer and the customers are thrown by his very Australian accent.

"Customers are here to eat Mongolian Lamb and Singapore Noodles, Long and Short Soup, Spring Rolls and Fried Rice. They're not here to eat Chinese food and they're certainly not here to be served by someone who isn't Chinese."

► Students can examine how the perspective of Dominic's uncle is represented in his dialogue, and contrast this with Dominic's perspective of stereotypes in Chinese culture.

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INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING PROJECT

This project supports teachers in focussing on the content and concepts in the NSW English K-10 Syllabus when programming, while addressing the 'general capability' of ***Intercultural Understanding*** in units of learning. General capabilities are embedded in the content of the English Syllabus. Through their choice of a diverse range of quality texts teachers are able to ensure that student learning involves high order thinking around the central concepts or 'big ideas' in English. All resources used in the project are available for loan from the Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre library.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The project demonstrates one example of how 'general capabilities' may be addressed through teaching English syllabus outcomes and content

CONCEPTUAL PROGRAMMING IN ENGLISH

Students respond to a diverse range of quality texts which build intercultural understanding, and model these in their own composing as they investigate English concepts such as:

- **Characterisation**
- **Representation**
- **Perspectives**
- **Interpretation**

THE HENRY PARKES EQUITY RESOURCE CENTRE LIBRARY

- The library loans resources to all DEC educators in NSW
- Texts used in the Intercultural Understanding Project, as well as interactive kits and professional learning resources are available free of charge from the library

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Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre

ADOBE CONNECT RECORDING: https://connect.schools.nsw.edu.au/p6eelyjo11w/

INTERPRETATION TEXT SET

Text title	Medium
STAGE 5	
• Africa to Australia, part one: do I really belong here?	Documentary
• The happiest refugee	Memoir
• Walk in my shoes	Novel
• The arrival	Picture book
• The story of an immigrant filmmaker	Documentary
• The angry kettle	Short story
• Tzafar	Short film
• Who are you anyway?	Playscript

Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

This project was completed in collaboration with: the NSW DEC Equity and Multicultural team, English K-10 team, Australian Curriculum – English K-10 team and the following teachers from metropolitan, rural and regional schools:

Jennifer Duvall – Cabramatta HS
Yvonne Millar – Moorebank HS
Tina Seckold – Dapto HS

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 1

Stage 5

Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

Africa to Australia, Part One: Do I Really Belong Here? by SBS Television

Medium: Interactive documentary

Do I really belong here? is a biographical account of a Sudanese man's immigration to Australia and the disconnect he feels with this new culture. He is confronted with the challenge of discarding his own cultural beliefs and behaviours to be accepted into mainstream expectations.

The text explores the role of culture in the construction of our identity. As the subject attempts to reconcile the conflict between his desire to maintain his culture and the expectations of mainstream society, he begins to question the perceived acceptance of migrants in Australia. The story forces us to question the distance between personal identity and a more broadly accepted collection of values and beliefs.

Students should question the effectiveness of the composer in positioning them to consider his understanding of mainstream expectations of migrants compared with their own. To respond critically, students will have to reflect deeply on and question their own understandings of 'Australian culture' and immigration, and how these are formed. Students might also consider the limitations and omissions evident in the text, and reflect upon how these shape their perceptions of the experiences described.

Excerpt 1

Quotes to use as discussion points:

'I tried to understand where I belonged in society. … because you don't see a reflection of yourself when you look at a TV screen'

'They tell you you are Australian – as long as you act like an Australian'

'I can't accept not being accepted for who I am'

► Students compare and contrast how the chosen words and how they are spoken position them to feel sympathy or empathy for the narrator. Students also consider and reflect on how different audiences might respond to the text.

Excerpt 2

► Students examine the static images and their construction to discuss the cultural assumptions being made about the composer as well as them as an audience.

Digital resource:

http://www.sbs.com.au/africatoaustralia/#/do-i-really-belong-here

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 2

Stage 5

Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

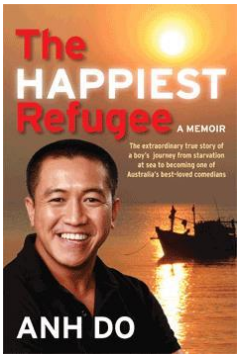
Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

The Happiest Refugee by **Anh Do**

Published by Allen & Unwin, 2010, Australia

Medium: Memoir



Vietnamese refugee Anh Do recounts the stories of his childhood growing up in Australia as a migrant. Do's humorous autobiography reflects on the challenges he and his family faced in trying to make a home in their new country, Australia.

Do's treacherous journey from his war torn homeland and the incomprehensible courage this required, surprisingly occupies only a small proportion of the author's memoirs. This reflects the composer's intention to position the audience to focus on his Australian experiences and his family's struggle to integrate into mainstream culture whilst still celebrating and appreciating their Vietnamese traditions and ways of life.

Do's comedic profile and presentation of material is engaging for students, but they will need to consider how humour is used to contrast the painful memories being described. While it is possible to focus on the sometimes stereotypical representations offered for the purpose of humour, students should be encouraged to examine how their initial response might belie a deeper understanding of the xenophobia, racism and cultural challenges which confront the Do family. At times, the stories also transcend rigid cultural stereotypes and generalisations that the audience might bring to the text, particularly regarding understood notions of a 'refugee story'. Students should be encouraged to consider how their own understanding is influenced by such preconceptions.

Excerpt 1

Page 36:

"Mum and Dad discovered working from home meant they didn't have to knock off at 6 p.m. They could keep going, and the harder they worked, the more money they made. All of a sudden their destiny was in their own hands"

► Students look for multiple interpretations of this event and similar events. They consider how these experiences might be understood as culturally specific or a part of the collective human experience.

Excerpt 2

Page 14:

"The boat was so small that we were jammed into every crevice, corner and spare patch of deck. It was almost impossible to get down stairs into the hold which was heaving with sweating bodies and suffocating stench of old fish."

► Students examine this and similar passages and consider if they are stereotypical or particular to Ahn Do's experience. Students question their reaction and consider how this has been constructed. Students also reflect on possible changes in their understanding, beliefs, attitudes and values, and articulate what has influenced or shaped these changes.

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 3

Stage 5

Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

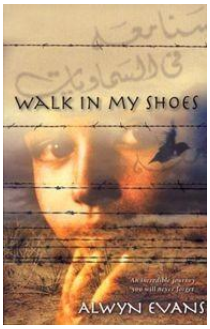
Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

Walk in My Shoes by **Alwyn Evans**

Published by Penguin Global, 2004, Australia

Medium: Novel



A sixteen year old girl who appears to have already 'settled' into Australia is discussing, through her diary, whether or not she is ready to tell her story. The official first chapter of the novel begins with the main character, Gulnessa, and her family arriving at a 'camp' in Australia from Afghanistan.

The cultural divide between Afghanistan and Australia has been highlighted through the character's struggle to interpret what she is witnessing and experiencing. The character's biggest challenge is defined through her inability to know what to expect from the new country, Australia, and what Australians might expect of her as a refugee.

Students can examine the gaps and silences in narration and how these assist the audience in finding their own interpretation of Gulnessa's story. The anecdotes can be deconstructed for their credibility and reliability in the presentation of the refugee experience. Student's individual experiences of acceptance can be compared to the refugee experience of acceptance as a way to create empathy for the main character and her family. Students can also question how they came to the conclusion of what a refugee's experience may be and what sources helped in determining this. Similarities and differences between other refugee experiences can be explored as well as students looking beyond the stereotypical elements that society and the media create about refugees and their resettlement. The reader will also need to consider the positive and negative ramifications of the story.

Excerpt 1

Chapter 2, pages 11 to 23:

"... a high wire fence… The people looked like us. I saw their fingers, knuckles white, locked around the wire… My heart stopped beating. Was this war again?... Their faces screamed, Help! But we were the ones who needed help. What could we do for them?... One man spoke loudly in Dari, our language… I'd no idea what many of the man's words meant, even in our own language…"

► *Students consider whether or not they sympathise with this experience and examine what factors of their own culture might contribute to this response. They also examine whether or not this experience meets with their previous beliefs about the experience of refugees.*

Excerpt 2

Chapter 3, pages 27 to 30:

"…This story was hard for me to tell. It's about Dad. I feel like someone kicks me in the stomach every time I think that we'll probably never see him again."

► Students consider how similarities between their own culture and that of the narrator position them to identify with her hardship.

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 4

Stage 5

Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

The Arrival by Shaun Tan

Published by Hachette Australia, 2014, Australia

Medium: Picture book

This wordless picture book is designed in the style of a photograph album and has been divided into six distinct chapters. Each chapter marks a phase of the male immigrant's physical, psychological and emotional journey from one country to another.

Two very different cultures are contrasted in this picture book. The overriding expectation is that the character will be challenged to assimilate into the culture of the new country and learn to amalgamate his old culture with the new to create a different identity. The process of this change is a direct reference to survival of an individual in a metaphorical and literal sense. This text clearly displays an Asian and Australian perspective.

A student's exploration and evaluation of this text will be measured through their interpretation of the immigrant's experience and how this can be likened to their own life experience. The layout of the pictures assists the students in being able to decode the difficulties the main character will undergo in his journey by allowing the students to place themselves in the character's shoes. The meaning made from these images will vary for each viewer because words do not accompany the pictures. Students can define and explore the meaning of the word assimilation and apply this to other immigrant experiences to draw on the similarities and differences in the actual experience of transitioning from one place to another. Students can consider how the culture of the immigrant can be adopted into the culture the character is transitioning into and how this process may help to inform completely new and emerging cultures in Australia.

Excerpt 1

Pages 7 and 8: 'The Old Country'

► Students can examine the metaphorical depiction of the sudden changes brought upon the homeland of the character and consider how this shapes their personal response to the text.

Excerpt 2

Page 22: 'The Flock'

► Students can examine how meaning is constructed in the composition and symbolism of this page. They can also consider the implications of this meaning in their Australian context.

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 5

Stage 5

Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

The Story of an Immigrant Filmmaker by **Agnes Karlik.** 4 minutes. Presented by Australian Centre for the Moving Image

Medium: Documentary

This digital story is a personal account of Agnes Karlick's journey to Australia with her father. Agnes' father obtained a job as a filmmaker and had the opportunity to document their journey from Hungary to Vienna to Australia.

The two cultures depicted, Hungarian and Australian, are a product of post-war Australia. The text explores the difficult choices involved in immigration, including expectations of security, economic prosperity and satisfaction in the new country. It also documents the tensions that arose in the struggle between maintaining tradition and adapting.

Viewers are able to understand the struggles that Hungarian migrants went through based on their interpretation of one person's account. The inherent credibility of the documentary form should be open to question, and students should be encouraged to consider how sources such as images and dialogue influence their personal response to the text.

They can examine whether or not the text supports their own perception of stereotypes about migrant cultures in Australia and how the historical perspective of the text might alter their perceptions.

Excerpt 1

00:00:29 to 00: 01:52 :

► Students can analyse how aspects of the clip, such as music, emotive language and first-hand footage position them to sympathise with the plight of the Hungarian migrants.

Excerpt 2

00:02:00 to 00:02:35 :

► Students can analyse how their own cultural assumptions about the importance of family and the home inform their response to the individual's story.

Digital resource:

http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/digital-stories-of-immigration/2254/the-story-of-an-immigrant-filmmaker/

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 6

Stage 5

Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

The Angry Kettle by **Ding Xiaoqi** adapted from Ding's Maidenhome, Aunt Lute Books, 1994, United States

Medium: Short story

In a share house, Ding and Michael are confronted by each other's habits and values and this divide is represented by Michael's kettle. Ding becomes so intimidated by Michael that she moves out of the share house. This short story was originally written in Chinese and has since been translated into English.

Whilst Michael perceives his kettle as a prized possession, Ding questions how Michael spent "three hundred and ninety nine dollars and ninety nine cents" on the kettle. Michael also spends much of his time correcting Ding's English to the point that Ding speaks "like a machine gun" to stop him from interrupting. In these ways, the text raises questions about both characters' cultural assumptions. The text also raises deeper questions about Asian and Western cultures and their ways of measuring economic worth. If the shared house is considered to be a microcosm of society, this text also considers how cultures interact and negotiate. That the text is written in first person from the perspective of Ding, raises questions about the author's interpretation and presentation of the events.

Students can examine how the author has positioned the reader by using first person narration in an attempt to influence the reader's interpretation. Students can also explore the symbolism of the kettle and consider how this symbol is a vehicle for understanding the variety of interpretations and cultural values presented in this text. Students can analyse the dialogue as a means of voicing both Ding and Michael's interpretations of the event, especially given that Michael's dialogue is written by Ding. Students can then question the validity of the author's assumptions, and students can consider the intended audience and the impact of translation. Students can also consider how their own culture and experiences influence their interpretation of the text.

Excerpt 1

"Otherwise the little whatsit would perk right up and start to scream through the apartment like a missile searching out its target. The sound was high and piercing, like a conquering hero determined to flatten everything in his path."

► Students can consider the author's perspective and the use of humour and choice of similes to convey values and cultural assumptions.

Excerpt 2

"To say he was annoying would be unfair, because he was always flashing smiles like winter sunlight in the city. In fact, he was the sort of man whose honest, decent appearance would make a woman relax right away. Still, I have to admit he was weird…"

► Students can examine the cultural assumptions that underpin the author's perspective and interpretation of Michael. Students can also question the validity of these assumptions and consider their own assumptions about the author and the author's interpretation of Michael.

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 7

Stage 5

Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

Tzafar by **Nancy Spetsioti** 3 minutes Produced by Dimitris Galanopoulos, 2013

Medium: Short film

A Greek family is confronted by the presence of an Indian man in the waiting room of a doctor's practice. Little do they know, this Indian man will save their daughter's life.

This text brings to question the assumptions one can have based on appearance. The bone marrow transfer can be understood to be a metaphor for aspects of humanity that may be considered more important than cultural differences.

Students can examine the difference between the each of the character's reactions and consider how age and gender might influence one's assumptions. Students can also question why the family's reaction to the man differs so greatly to the cultural assumptions portrayed by the doctor and nurse. Students can reflect on how their own cultural identity informs their interpretation and reactions at different stages of the short film; from before the family enters, to when the family first enters and separates themselves from the man, to the film's conclusion.

Excerpt 1

00:00:00 to 00:00:52 : The opening

► Students can consider their initial interpretation of the Indian man sitting at the chairs by himself and question what cultural assumptions underpin this interpretation. They can consider how the actors' movements and facial expressions inform their opinion of the Greek family.

Excerpt 2

00:01:25 to 00:01:45 : In the doctor's room

► Students can reflect on how the shifting perspective offered by the film positions them to interpret the action, and whether or not this is successful. They can examine how aspects of their own experiences might shape their interpretation.

Digital resource:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfccrwUlROU

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INTERPRETATION

TEXT 8

Stage 5

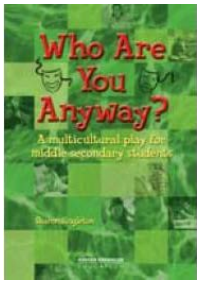
Outcomes: EN5-5C, EN5-7D, EN5-8D

Key ideas:

- Students examine the aspects of their own culture that contribute to their personal interpretation of text.
- Students examine the cultural assumptions that underpin construction of meaning and question the validity of these assumptions.
- Students consider how people from different cultures might respond differently to text.

Who Are You Anyway? by **Sharon Singleton** Published by Hawker Brownlow Education, 2003, Australia

Medium: Playscript



In a city school, four girls from very different cultures come together to share their experiences and relationships. One of the set, Laila, has recently arrived from Lebanon and attempts to assimilate whilst managing her family's expectations and peer group pressure.

The cultural conflict in this text is the complicated negotiation process that occurs between the culture of recent immigrants and that of their new country. Issues of familial expectations, wanting to belong to a new society, peer group pressures and language barriers are explored through Laila and her family. As a play, the dialogue inherently explores a range of perspectives on these cultural issues and presumes a reaction from the audience that allows for deep self-reflection and questioning.

When students read certain roles, they can reflect upon how their own emotions and experiences helped them to portray the character's perspective. Students can analyse how Laila's language and lack of fluency positions them to understand her character's difficulties in adapting to a new culture. Students can question who the intended audience for the play might be and consider how the meaning of the play would differ for a variety of audiences.

Excerpt 1

Act 1, Scene 1: The arrival of Laila's family at the airport.

► Students can consider how the multiple conflicting perspectives provided by Laila, the father, the mother and the security guards contribute to their understanding of the text. They can also evaluate the author's use of humour and consider how this informs their interpretation of events.

Excerpt 2

Act 1, Scene 7: Laila's parents take on the supermarket.

► Students can evaluate how successfully dialogue, including broken English, is used to represent the cultural differences of Laila's family. Students can question the cultural assumptions underpinning the composition of and response to an English language play involving many characters who have difficulty speaking English.

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