

**ADVANCED CURRICULUM FROM THE  
CENTER FOR GIFTED EDUCATION AT WILLIAM & MARY**

# **Challenging Australian Curriculum: English Lessons**

**Activities and Extensions for Gifted and Advanced Learners in  
YEAR 5**

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Australian Curriculum: English is a framework for F–12 curriculum standards that describe the English skills and concepts students need to develop for success in higher education and the 21st-century workplace.

With the adoption of the Australian Curriculum, gifted and advanced learners need opportunities to master year-level standards in English with greater depth, rigour and understanding. This revised, Australian edition of *Challenging Common Core Language Arts Lessons* is one of a series of books developed in conjunction with the Center for Gifted Education at William & Mary, and is intended to give gifted and advanced learners additional practice and activities to master and engage with the Australian Curriculum standards for English. Each book in the series is organised by the content descriptions for one year level.

The lessons in this book cover Year 5 English content. In Year 5, the content descriptions are addressed under three sub-strands:

- Language: knowing about the English language
- Literature: understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literary texts
- Literacy: expanding the repertoire of English usage.

## PURPOSE

The lessons in this book were written with the assumption that a teacher has already introduced Australian Curriculum: English content descriptions into their classroom practice. Reading, writing and speaking activities enrich and extend current year level English content rather than accelerate students to above-year-level content. Each lesson focuses on multiple content descriptions, due to the overlap of skills inherent in English activities, and provides additional support and enrichment for gifted and advanced learners. Key curriculum content descriptions for each lesson can be found on page 127.

## BOOK AND LESSON STRUCTURE

This book is divided into four units, each of which contains multiple lessons. Each unit focuses on a theme and centres on the ideas related to the theme within literature and nonfiction texts. Within the unit, students will read, analyse, evaluate and interpret poetry, short stories and novels containing the theme. Students will demonstrate their growing understanding of this theme through various projects, narrative writing, informative writing, persuasive writing and presentations.

Each lesson within a unit follows a predictable structure:

- The objectives highlight what students will learn or be able to do as a result of completing the lesson.
- A page reference to key Australian Curriculum: English content descriptions for the lesson is given.
- The lesson plan includes an estimate for the time it might take to complete the lesson, but this will vary by teacher and classroom.
- Materials, including all student activity pages needed, are listed. It is assumed students will have access to commonplace items such as pencils and paper, so the materials noted are those that teachers will need to obtain in advance.
- A number of the required readings are available online. It is anticipated that using these materials will allow for easy access to appropriate readings. In many cases, the readings that are used may come from sources outside of a typical Year 5 program.
- An overview of the lesson's content provides a quick guide to the activities in which the students will be participating.
- A description of prior knowledge needed as a prerequisite for understanding the activities in a lesson is given. The teacher should be sure the students already have a working understanding of this content before beginning the lesson. Because the intended use of the activities is for students who have already mastered the stated standards, the teacher may want to assess prior learning before having students complete the activities.
- The instructional sequence provides a detailed description of what the teacher and students will do during the lesson.
- The extension activities listed provide follow-up learning opportunities for students that go beyond the lesson to provide both additional enrichment and extension. Activities may be completed by individuals or groups, and may be completed at school or at home.
- At the end of each unit, a culminating essay is presented to provide closure and to assess students' synthesis of unit ideas.

## THE SELECTION OF TEXT EXEMPLARS

The text exemplars selected for the book meet the specific criteria for high-ability learners suggested by Baskin and Harris (1980). These criteria (Center for Gifted Education, 2011) include

- the language used in texts for the gifted should be rich, varied, precise, complex and exciting
- texts should be chosen with a consideration of their open-endedness and their capacity to inspire thoughtful engagement
- texts for the gifted should be complex so that they promote interpretive and evaluative behaviours by readers

- texts for the gifted should help them develop problem-solving skills and acquire methods of productive thinking
- texts should provide characters as role models
- text types should cover a full range of materials and genres. (p. 15)

## TOOLS FOR ANALYSING TEXTS

For the majority of the activities in this book, it is recommended that the teacher have students complete the Literature Analysis Model (see Figure 1) as part of their first encounter with the text. When students read the text for the first time, they should annotate it or use text coding (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007) as a metacognitive strategy to aid in comprehension. Once this marking of the text has occurred, the student should use the Literature Analysis Model and engage in a discussion about it (or selected portions) before progressing to other lesson activities.

The Literature Analysis Model encourages students to consider seven aspects of a selection they are reading: key words, tone, mood, imagery, symbolism, key ideas and the structure of writing (Center for Gifted Education, 2011; McKeague, 2009; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010). After reading a selection, this model helps students to organise their initial responses and provides them with a basis for discussing the piece in small or large groups. Whenever possible, students should be allowed to underline and make notes as they read the material. After marking the text, they can organise their notes into the model.

Suggested questions for completing and discussing the model are:

- **Key words:** What words are important for understanding the selection? Which words did the author use for emphasis?
- **Important ideas:** What is the main idea of the selection? What are other important ideas in the selection?
- **Tone:** What is the attitude or what are the feelings of the author toward the subject of the selection? What words does the author use to indicate tone?
- **Mood:** What emotions do you feel when reading the selection? How do the setting, images, objects and details contribute to the mood?
- **Imagery:** What are examples of the descriptive language that is used to create sensory impressions in the selection?
- **Symbolism:** What symbols are used to represent other things?
- **Structure of writing:** What are some important characteristics of the way this piece is written? How do the parts of this selection fit together and relate to each other? How do structural elements contribute to the meaning of the piece?

## UNIT I

# From Failure to Success

This unit centres on the theme of how success can result from failure. Within the unit, students will read, analyse, evaluate and interpret texts about the expeditions of Ernest Shackleton and his contemporaries and explore how their triumphs and failures contributed to discovery, learning and personal growth. Students will consider ways in which it may be possible to learn more from failure than success. Students will demonstrate their growing understanding of this theme through various projects, research, informative writing, persuasive writing and presentations.

# LESSON 1.1

## Creating Questions to Solve Problems

### Objectives

In this lesson, students will

- make and explain inferences drawn from a text
- demonstrate the ability to quote from a text when explaining what a text says explicitly, and use inferences drawn from a text in order to create a framework of questions that will guide further research on a topic.

### Estimated Time

- 40–50 minutes

### Australian Curriculum: English Content Descriptions

See Australian Curriculum: English Alignment, p. 127

### Materials

- Lesson 1.1 Literature Analysis Model
- Student copies of *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* by Jennifer Armstrong
- Student copies of *Ice Story: Shackleton's Lost Expedition* by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel (optional)
- Flip-chart paper and texts for students

### Content

Students will discuss the outcome of Shackleton's voyage to the Antarctic and whether it can be considered a failure or a success. They will be presented with a research topic and will work in groups to generate research questions.

### Prior Knowledge

Students will need to have read *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* by Jennifer Armstrong. They should have participated in discussions about the book's events and analysed the text for content-specific language. Students also will need to have the ability to make inferences and explain them using evidence from the text.

## INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

1. Have students analyse at least one chapter of *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* by Jennifer Armstrong using the Literature Analysis Model. For an initial analysis, work with students to complete Lesson

- 1.1 Literature Analysis Model. You may wish to leave some of the boxes blank that may not be particularly relevant for this type of text. (See pp. 3–4 for additional information about using the Literature Analysis Model.)
2. As a class, discuss whether Shackleton's expedition to the Antarctic failed or succeeded. Guiding questions may include:
    - Did he accomplish his goal to cross Antarctica from "sea to sea"?
    - Was the fact that he managed to bring back every member of his crew alive even though the ship was crushed considered a success?
    - What are some ways it could be considered successful?
    - What are some ways it could be considered a failure?
  3. Ask: *How might it be possible to learn more from failure than success?* Tell students that they will be researching this topic. Direct students to talk with a partner and create a list of what they consider to have been successes and failures that occurred on Shackleton's expedition. After students have completed their lists, generate a T-chart and list student responses.
  4. Choosing one failure and one success, model how to create a research question that can be used to gather information. For example, one failure that occurred on the journey was that the ship got stuck in pack ice. Sample research questions about this failure include:
    - What information could Shackleton have used to avoid getting stuck in the pack ice?
    - What other tools could have been brought on the expedition to help release the ship from the pack ice?
  5. Divide the class into groups of 3–4 and give each group a piece of chart paper and textas. Ask groups to create additional questions that could be used to answer the essential question and Shackleton's decisions as the expedition leader.
  6. Allow at least 15 minutes for students to complete this task. Move around the groups to check on student progress, assess their understanding and answer questions as needed.
  7. When students have completed this task, create an anchor chart. Ask students to share the questions that they generated with their group. As students share their responses, ask them to explain why their question is a good one, citing examples from the text to support their choice. Display the anchor chart somewhere in the classroom where all students can see it.

### Extension Activities

Students may

- choose an explorer (other than Shackleton) and complete independent research on the success or failure of that explorer's expedition(s) and the possible reasons for the outcome
- write a brief narrative, recounting a time they experienced failure in trying to achieve a personal goal and what they learned from the experience.

**Teacher's Note.** Using the first extension activity, consider beginning the remaining lessons in the unit with a "Moment in Time" during which students can briefly share what they discovered about the explorer they researched.

## UNIT II

# The Hero's Journey

This unit centres on the themes related to the hero's journey, as recounted through the choices, events, and personal transformation experienced by the protagonist Meg in the novel *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle. Within the unit, students will read, analyse, evaluate and interpret the novel and other texts that examine the hero's journey archetype. They will explore what it means to be a hero, a hero's role in society and how an author communicates their message and important themes through a story. Students will demonstrate their growing understanding of this theme through various projects, narrative writing, informative writing, persuasive writing and poetry.

## UNIT III

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# Conflict and Consequences

This unit centres on themes related to conflict, as seen through the people, places and events leading up to the Eureka Stockade and its aftermath. Within the unit, students will read, analyse, evaluate and interpret novels, poetry, primary sources and nonfiction texts, exploring the types of conflict, both personal and societal, experienced during the miner's rebellion. They will consider the roles historical figures played in events that helped shape Australia's national identity. Students will demonstrate their growing understanding of this theme through various projects, narrative writing, informative writing and persuasive writing.