



UNLEASHING CREATIVITY

Teach me to climb outside of the box

ABSTRACT

Creativity involves a degree of risk-taking. No student will risk-take if they do not feel confident. Our students need to be taught explicitly the artistry of English and then be allowed the freedom to experiment and create.

Karen Yager

Outside the Box

Alan Maley Nagoya, November 2010

Being inside the box
was comfortable –
warm and cosy.
We curled up
with cushions of routine,
wadded with words,
blanketed by books,
swaddled in certainties.
A bit stuffy perhaps,
and we sometimes felt cramped,
but never mind,
we were so used to it
that it felt normal –
and, as I said,
comfortable.

Out here we are exposed,
and cold winds blow.
We need to hold on tight,
keep our eyes open
for sudden snow squalls,
hidden crevasses.
It's a precarious existence now –
but here we can move and breathe,
see clear to the far horizon.
And if we come to a cliff,
we know we can step off it
into empty air,
trusting it to bear us up.
We have no fear
of
falling.



The Research

Our students will be moving into a world with increasingly complex problems that will require them to develop creative solutions. Our students will develop a greater sense of agency if they are provided with opportunities to be creative. If our students' creativity is to be fostered, then there needs to be a paradigmatic shift in curriculum design and delivery, and the development of a culture that values originality, active learning and invention (Craft 2005). Creativity flourishes when students have the confidence to explore, take risks and be creative within a structured environment.

Our subject English provides the most enriching opportunities for students to be creative. Creativity in the classroom does not have to involve epochal changes. Even very small changes can bring about disproportionately large creative benefits. Westwell (2009) & Black (2014): Creativity flourishes when connected to what is already known, clear goals are evident and skills are explicitly taught.

Likewise, creativity tends to improve student self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness. This enhanced sense of self-worth also feeds into more committed and more effective learning. When we are exercising our creative capacities we tend to feel more ourselves, and more alive.

Encouraging an environment of trust – between teacher and class and among class members – is absolutely crucial.

Pedagogy

We need to be more creative as teachers. Professor Allen Luke stated that teaching is a “symphony of pedagogy”. Thus, we need to vary the way we teach lessons and design assessment tasks. Create unexpected moments in the classroom and endeavour to make learning exciting and challenging.

Here are some simple ideas:

- 1. The Provocative questions:** Each week on a Monday, provoke thought with a challenging question connected to what is being studied. Add more tantalising clues each day. E.g. You are teaching Shakespeare's *Richard III* through the conceptual lens of context. Your question when you are beginning with Shakespeare's context might be “What did Shakespeare take a good king and make him evil?” Each day you add a clue, such as the following:
 - a. Tuesday: “This Sir wrote of ‘no place’ and clearly disliked the boar.”
 - b. Wednesday: “Standing on the sideline of battle was Stanley.”
 - c. Thursday: “Brothers protected in a tower.”
- 2. Writing challenge a day:** Begin each lesson with a short, sharp six-minute writing task. It could be in any form or genre. Provide a clue the day before and then have the challenge ready as the students enter the room. It could be an image, a question,

a line from a poem, a short film clip... The students write for six-minutes and then share their writing with another student. Each day, they choose another partner. You could add the challenge of an ingredient, such as forceful verbs.

3. **Change the environment:** Take the students outside for a writing activity. Give them a set time and then ask them to walk and share their writing with another student who provides feedback.
4. **Strategic questioning:** Create an inquiry-based classroom. Vary your questioning approach in class. You could use Langford's Five Why's to drill down or five stick-it notes with questions given to students at the start of the lesson who can 'phone a friend'. Use the William's programming model to design questions or try Poll Everywhere - <https://www.polleverywhere.com/>. Dylan William has some great ideas. More importantly, encourage your students to design the questions so that they own the learning. Instead of posing a question, provide a focus, such as TS Eliot and the objective correlative, and then ask the students to design the questions that address this focus.
5. **Bower Bird Wall:** have one wall in your classroom where students share their favourite line or quote. It becomes a place of inspiration. Students can become bower birds of writing.
6. **Co-designed assessment tasks:** Trust your students to design an assessment task. Provide them with the marking guidelines and task expectations and let them go from there!
7. **Inquiry or project-based learning:** This can be applied to formative or summative tasks. The students work collaboratively in teams on an authentic project, such as how to capture the stories of elderly residents in a nursing home.

Creativity in writing

Rich texts to stimulate and inspire

If our students are to be inspired to write effectively they need to experience a plethora of quality texts that feature evocative settings, authentic characters, different approaches to form and structure, rich use of language and meaningful ideas. This must start in the junior years. We need to remember to encourage our students to delight in the aesthetic use of language.

The poets teach our students about fusing the language into compact and powerful texts that appeal to the senses, embrace lexical density and use form and structure to convey ideas that resonate. The playwrights demonstrate how to play with dialogue to reach and audience and our authors teach the art of characterisation. Photographers and painters provide fertile images that can trigger memories and stimulate ideas. The director teaches students to use verbal cinema to capture the intricate details, provide the back story and a

mise-en-scene for a character and experiment with form, structure and points of view. The orator reminds students about the power of words, and the musician allows our imagination to soar.

Immerse students in a plethora of extracts from texts that use language, form and structure skilfully. You can access a range of texts and resources at the following websites:

Rich texts

- Poem Hunter: <http://www.poemhunter.com/> - thousands of quality poems from all periods.
- Australian Films: <http://aso.gov.au/education/> - Clips from Australian films, documentaries and advertisements, and teaching resources.
- Poetry Library: <http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets-name> - Australian poetry library.
- Poetry in Translation: <http://poetryintranslation.com/> - Poetry from countries across the world.
- Asiacha: <http://www.asiancha.com/> - Asian poetry, short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- Poetry Kanto: <http://poetrykanto.com/> - A range of Japanese poetry.
- Muse India: <http://www.museindia.com/regular.asp?id=40> - A range of Indian poetry.
- The Shed: <http://www.literacyshed.com/the-other-cultures-shed.html> - brilliant site with a rich range of film clips, images and ideas to inspire writing for students of all ages.
- National Geographic: http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/#/mursi-man-ethiopia_39901_600x450.jpg - a range of fascinating images of people from the net:
- Tropfest film clips: *Be My Brother* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d-7IFN4DKA>, *The Unspoken* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttA2Nk-bFog>, and *Lullaby* - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAIvJ_hsW4I
- Award winning GGI animations: Such as *Home Sweet Home* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKRZn0uS6eA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmqQh2o9K-4> - *Worlds Apart*
- Backhand Stories: <http://www.backhandstories.com/non-fiction/> - a range of short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- Newspapers: <http://www.newspapers.com/> - 1200 newspapers from across America 1700-200s.
- Free audio recordings: <http://www.openculture.com/freeaudiobooks>
- Songs to inspire writing: <http://tylerlehmann.wordpress.com/2013/01/16/the-writers-playlist-15-songs-to-inspire-better-creative-writing/>

Writing everyday through vignettes

Concept: Place

Minutiae

We need to remind our students to open their eyes and see the potential in what is around them.

- Take the students outside for a walk through the playground.
- Ask them to find an object that they are drawn to, such as a weed struggling to grow in the crack of a pavement, a piece of paper playing in the wind gusts, an ant valiantly navigating the treacherous expanse of the playground, or the bees gathering nectar from a flower...
- Make them aware of the sensory details: sounds, smells, sights and how they feel.
- They have three minutes to observe the object and then two minutes to record a list of adjectives, verbs and phrases to describe the object and its setting.
- They have five minutes to compose one or two paragraphs that describe the object. When the time is up they find a critical friend and share their writing.
- Refine the writing:
- Extracts from texts that use evocative descriptions of place or an object; in particular, auditory and visceral imagery
- Critique the writing
- Focus on two aspects, such as the auditory imagery: consonants, vowels and the use of onomatopoeia
- Reimagine and refine own writing
- Pebble writing: Provide each child with a small rock and they have to write a haiku or short description on the rock that is then placed in the classroom or in a “garden of stories”.

Through the lens of a camera

By seeing the world through the lens of a camera students learn how to be more effective writers – verbal cinema.

- The students take a walk through their neighbourhood with a parent and take 20 photographs that will allow people too ‘see’ the place.
- They could create a detailed map of the area to accompany the images and writing.
- They add a description to each photograph and create instagrams or a Pecha Kucha (20 images X 20 seconds – the images advance automatically)
- <http://www.pechakucha.org/>
- Participate in the Harvard “Out of Eden Walk”

Master Chef Challenge

Place students in a small team or on their own and give them a box with the following ingredients. They have 30 minutes to create a masterpiece.

- 50-words only
- Ban the letter ‘e’

- Specific ingredients in the secret box. E.g.
- A shell
- Two words: “memories” and “hidden”
- A flower
- A line or poetry – ‘*To see a world in a grain of sand...*’

Concept: Place

Research a place like a writer. The students have to try to paint the setting in just 200 words using sensuous imagery, place names and figurative and sound devices:

- Moscow in the winter
- London near the London Bridge and the Tower of London during spring
- Old Delhi during the summer
- Amsterdam in the winter
- Hong Kong during an afternoon shower
- Abu Dhabi by night

Found poems or centos and poems in the manner of...

Students can learn to write like a master by finding the best lines to create an “original” found poem or cento. Give the students a concept or theme and allow them 30 minutes to steal lines from poems, stories and articles on the net. David Lehman has produced an excellent book called *Poems in the Manner Of...* where he has created centos and poems that imitate, parody and pay homage to canonical poets, such as Eliot and Wordsworth. He has written a clever cento entitled “Centos: The True Romantics” where he has stolen a line from Coleridge, Keats and others.

Preposition poem

Poets often begin lines with a preposition to so that the reader is immersed in the place and time of a poem. They provide direction and invite the reader to see through the persona’s eyes and move with them through a poem. Share with students “The Pine-trees in the Courtyard” by Li Po

- Provide a list of common prepositions
- Students to rewrite their 50 word story or first sensory piece
- Move to describing other experiences in different places, such as:
 - Riding a wave on a surf-board
 - Walking through a bush trail
 - Walking through a busy shopping centre during lunchtime
 - Looking at rock pools beside the ocean

aboard	about	above	among
against	according to	across	after
as	as to	along	alongside

amid	around	before	behind
below	beneath	beside	between
beyond	but	by	despite
down	during	except	for
from	inside	instead	in
into	like	near	next
of	off	on	onto
outside	out	over	past
since	than	through	throughout
to	toward	under	underneath
unlike	until	up	upon
with	within	without	within

Childhood Memories

- “When I was young I was invincible.”
- The students have 20 minutes to construct a 250-300 word vignette.
- Then they work with a small group that critiques each other’s work for the remainder of the lesson suggesting how the sentence structures could be improved.



Palindrome

Palindrome: Reads the same backwards as forward. Forces students to focus on the meaning and placement of every word.

- *Lost Generation* – John Reed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42E2fAWM6rA>

Concept: Genre

- Minecraft – build a sustainable colony on Mars or a setting for a choose your own adventure story.
- NASA haikus competition: <http://swampland.time.com/2013/08/09/nasa-is-sending-these-poems-to-mars/>
- Tracey.K.Smith: *Life on Mars* –anthology of poetry (stage 3)
- *Worlds Apart* – animation - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_R2wdWeF6Q

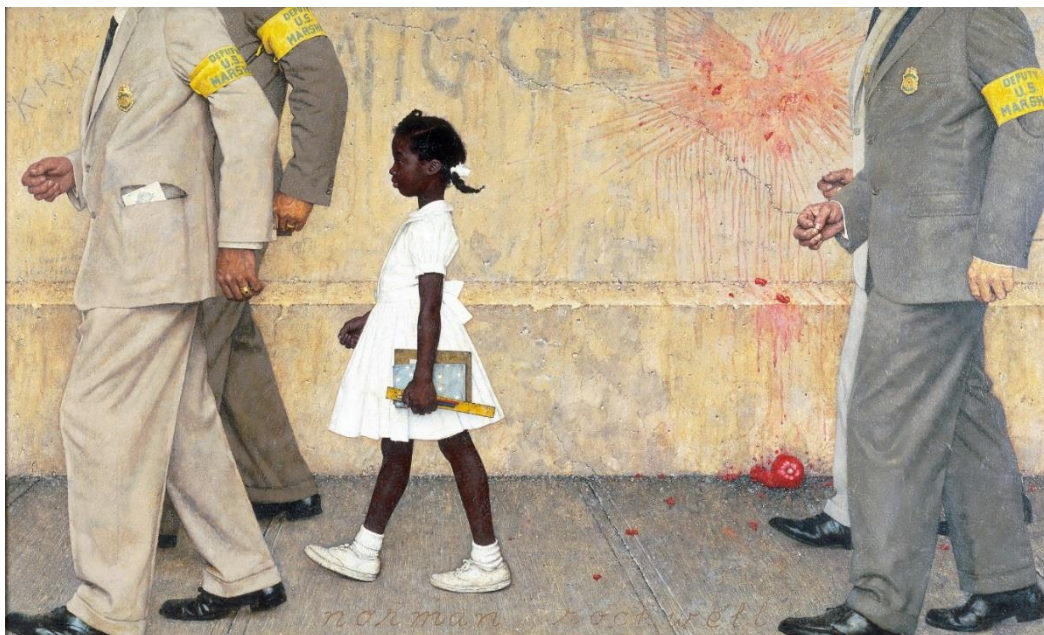
Concept: Appropriation

Ekaphrastic Poetry

Ekaphrastic poetry is inspired by a photograph, image or artwork. One of the most famous examples is John Keats' poem "Ode to a Grecian Urn". Using a stimulus such as a painting or a photograph provides students with the initial topic and ideas.

Ask them to complete the following exercises:

1. Select a painting that speaks to you.
2. Research the artist and the painting.
3. Describe what is happening. Focus on using striking verbs!
4. Describe how the people in the painting feel. Focus on developing evocative adjectives, emotive words, strong verbs and striking imagery.
5. Decide what has happened or will happen. Focus on positional prepositions.
6. Develop a key message or theme. Focus on emotive words.
7. Compose an original ekaphrastic poem!



Technology and creativity

According to a 2015 OECD report there is no evidence of any impact of technology on improved literacy outcomes. However, it has been shown to improve higher-order thinking skills and conceptual understanding and in many cases has enhanced students' creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills.

We can utilise technology for:

- Inspiration
- Creativity & co-creation
- Collaboration Feedback
- Publication
- Craft to artistry
- Global connections

Inspiration

- Snowfall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek: <http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/>
- Inanimate Alice: <http://www.inanimatealice.com/>
- Dust Echoes: <http://www.abc.net.au/dustechoes/dustEchoesFlash.htm>
- Poetry on YouTube: Luka Lesson 'Antidote' and Billy Collins animated poetry
- Leonardo Flores: <http://iloveepoetry.com/>
- Short of the Week: <https://www.shortoftheweek.com/>
- *The Alchemist's Letter* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXbf0QSiLv4>
- CGI award winning animations, such as *Worlds Apart* & *Home Sweet Home*

Creativity and co-creation

- A multimodal poem or narrative
- A character's blog, Fakebook or website
- Choose your own adventure
- iBooks
- Instagram tales
- A travel tale: Google Earth

- Google Lit Trip - <http://www.googlelittrips.org/>
- Celtx play/film script - <https://www.celtx.com/index.html>
- Museum Box
- Found poetry or cantos
- Pecha Kucha

Collaboration and feedback

- Google docs or Google classroom
- Class blog or wiki
- *Screencast-O-Matic*
- *Explain everything*

Global connections

- Asia Connexions
- Skype in the Classroom: <https://education.microsoft.com/skype-in-the-classroom/overview>
- *Out of Eden* – National Geographic & Harvard: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/out-of-eden-walk/>
- Epals: <https://www.epals.com/#/connections>
- Global Goals: <http://www.globalgoals.org/>

ART & POETRY: THE POWER OF WORDS & IMAGES

BACKGROUND

Edgar Allan Poe stated that “*Words have no power to impress the mind without the mind exquisite horror of reality.*” Poets employ words to engage us emotionally in their poetry and provoke us to ponder their ideas. Artists have also used colour, images and composition to express their emotions to convey a significant idea.



There are those poets and artists that dare to challenge and confront society by highlighting significant concerns. American poet Maya Angelou in her famous poem “Still I Rise” about racism stated:

*You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.*

Banksy, the infamous graffiti artist, has painted provocative images on street corners, buildings and walls to protest against a range of issues, from war to racism, such as the artwork protesting against the squalid conditions in an urban setting.

THE TASK

Create an original poem and artwork that use words and images to express powerfully a concern about any significant issue. The artwork and poem must be thematically, symbolically and physically connected, such as words that encircle an image. Please take note of the following:

- The poem and artwork must be **closely connected** symbolically and physically.
- You have to use at least one of each of the following figurative devices: metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, alliteration and an oxymoron.

Please write your figurative device examples here (5 marks):

- Metaphor:.....
- Simile:
- Onomatopoeia:
- Alliteration:
- Oxymoron:

MATERIALS

- Two A4 sheets of paper
- Two A4 sheets of cardboard
- Lead pencils, coloured pencils and/or oil crayons
- Sticky tape (Use sparingly)

MARKING CRITERIA

MARKING CRITERIA	POEM	ARTWORK
Original interpretation of the task	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Creativity of the poem and artwork	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
The CLOSE thematic, symbolic and physical interconnectedness of the poetry and the 3D artwork	0 1 2 3 4 5	6 7 8 9 10
The powerful use of words and images to express a concern about any significant issue	0 1 2 3 4 5	6 7 8 9 10
The 5 figurative devices – one mark each	1 2 3 4 5	
TOTAL	/45	

TASK: INSPIRED BY THE CONCEPT OF IMAGINATION

Background information

Sir Ken Robinson said that “We have an extraordinary human power... the power of imagination”. Inventors and scientists have used their imaginations to create extraordinary things. Albert Einstein credited much of his revolutionary scientific work to his imagination, Leonardo da Vinci used his imagination to design flying machines and weapons of war, and Nikola Tesla claimed to have mapped out all of the details of his inventions entirely in his imagination before ever putting pen to paper or doing any work in the lab. The imagination has helped shaped our world and continues to promise so many exciting new discoveries and inventions.



Use your imagination to focus on a local or universal concern, such as poverty, global warming, terrorism, wars and overcrowded cities. What could you invent to make a difference?

Your task is to create an interconnected original poem and 3D artwork that describes your new invention and the difference it could make. Ensure that we know what you are using your imagination to solve or improve.

Remember the following:

- The poem and 3D artwork must be **closely connected** symbolically and physically.
- Do not describe a real life invention, use your imagination to dream of an original one.
- You have to use at least one of each of the following figurative devices: metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, alliteration and sibilants.

Materials

- Two A4 sheets of paper
- Two A4 sheets of cardboard
- Lead pencils, coloured pencils and/or oil crayons
- Sticky tape (Use sparingly)

Marking guidelines

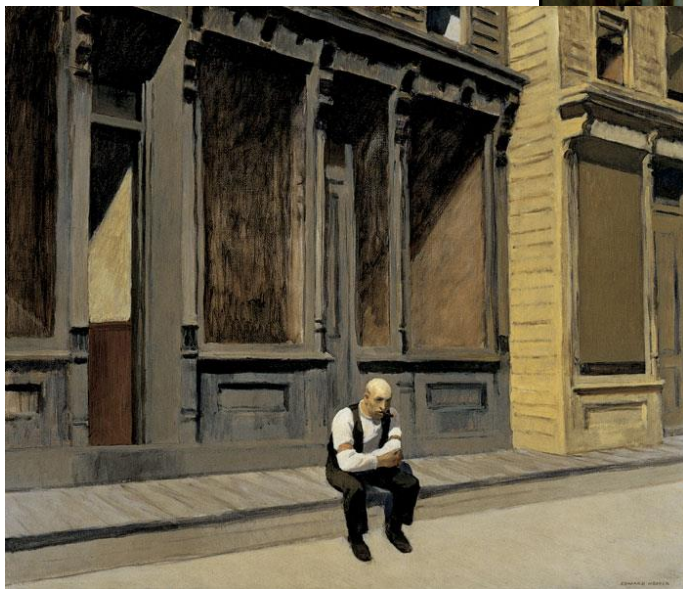
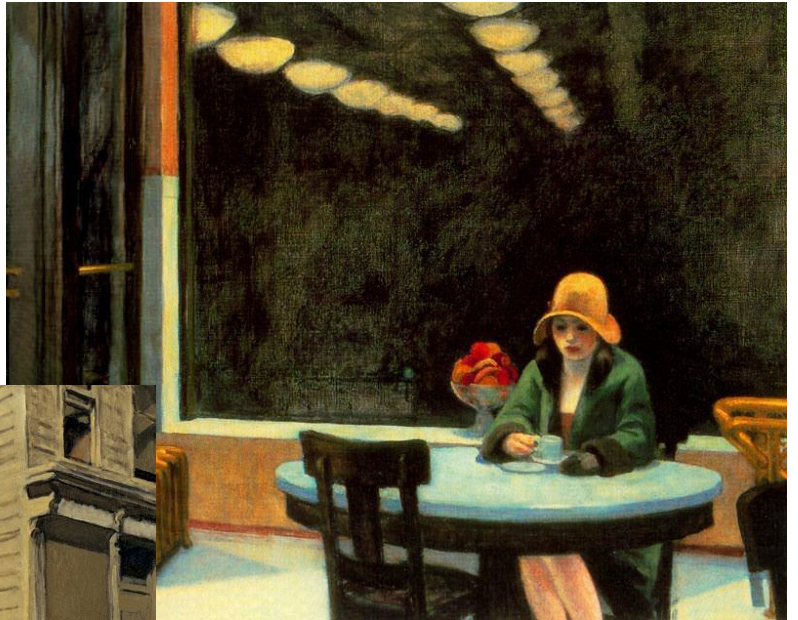
MARKING CRITERIA	POEM	ARTWORK
Original interpretation of the task	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Creativity of the poem and artwork	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
The CLOSE symbolic and physical interconnectedness of the poetry and the 3D artwork	0 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10
The use of the imagination to describe an invention and the difference it could make evident through the poem and the artwork	0 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10
The 5 figurative devices – one mark each		1 2 3 4 5
TOTAL		/45

THE UNTOLD STORIES OF PEOPLE'S JOURNEYS IN ARTWORKS

BACKGROUND

Have you ever looked at a painting of a journey and wondered about the people that the artist has captured and their stories?

Artist Edward Hopper's famous paintings in the early 20th century of lonely individuals who had stopped on their journeys at places across America, such as a café, a petrol station or a bar. They were depicted as



lost in thought, such as the woman in 'Automat' or the man in New York in 'Isolation'. His paintings invite endless interpretations; they have been described as representations of loneliness, alienation, melancholy, or solitude.

THE TASK

You are is challenged to create an integrated original poem and artwork that tells the story of the woman or the man in the paintings. You could appropriate Hopper's style and images to create your artwork. The artwork and poem must be thematically, symbolically and physically connected, such as words that encircle or weave through an image. Please take note of the following:

- You must create the story through the poem and the artwork of the man or woman in Hopper's paintings.
- The poem and artwork must be **closely connected** thematically, symbolically and physically.

- A significant message must be conveyed through **BOTH** the poem and the artwork about the mindset of the man or woman triggered by his or her journey.

MATERIALS

- Three A4 sheets of paper
- Two A4 sheets of cardboard
- Lead pencils, coloured pencils and/or oil crayons
- Glue (if needed)
- Sticky tape (Use sparingly if needed)

MARKING CRITERIA

MARKING CRITERIA	POEM	ARTWORK
Original interpretation of the task	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Creativity of the poem and artwork	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
A significant message about how the mindset of the persona has been influenced by the journey	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
The CLOSE thematic, symbolic and physical interconnectedness of the poetry and artwork	0 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10
The evocative and skilful use of words and images to convey the impact of the journey	0 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10
TOTAL		/50

IDEATION

BACKGROUND

The process of ideation involves creativity, courage, purpose, deep knowledge, passion and the willingness to take risks. It is the last two aspects that can cause the most problems.

Individuals can be so blinded by their passion to innovate and create new designs that they take unnecessary risks without pausing to consider the consequences. In Ancient Greece, the myth of Icarus provides an example of unmediated risk-taking driven by hubris. Modern poet, Wendy. A. Shaffer, has written this version of Icarus' tragedy:



Did Icarus,
falling,
watching white feathers flutter upward,
curse the wax as a fair-weather friend?
It seemed such a strong solid type,
but it melted away
when things got hot.

Did he rail at the sun,
which beckoned enticingly,
and then changed from a beacon to a furnace?

Did he blame Daedalus, his father?
Who warned him not to fly too high
in the same distracted tones with which
he admonished his son
to put on a sweater in the cold,
to eat his lima beans,
to not run with scissors.
How could he have known that this time the old man really meant it?

Or did he regret that the illustrious inventor,
when creating his flying apparatus,
did not take the obvious next step:
the emergency parachute?

He must have thought
all of this
and more.

It was
 a long
 long
 fall.

But as he neared the ocean,
 came close enough to wave to the startled fishermen in their boats,
 he laughed,
 and admitted
 that even had he known
 of the many failings of fathers and feathers,
 he would have done it anyway.

THE TASK

Your challenge is to create an **interconnected** original poem and 3D artwork about a known real or fictitious designer or inventor whose invention caused unexpected consequences.

The artwork and poem must be thematically, symbolically and physically connected. Please take note of the following:

- The poem and 3D artwork must be **closely connected** thematically, symbolically and physically.
- The artwork must be 3D.
- You must include an unexpected consequence.
- You have to include an intertextual link to a known real or fictitious designer or inventor. E.g. The Time Traveller, Henry Ford, Dr Frankenstein, etc.

MATERIALS

- Two A4 sheets of paper
- Two A4 sheets of cardboard
- Lead pencils, coloured pencils and/or oil crayons
- Sticky tape (Use sparingly)

MARKING CRITERIA

MARKING CRITERIA	POEM	ARTWORK
Original and clever interpretation of the task	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Creativity of the poem and artwork	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
The CLOSE thematic, symbolic and physical interconnectedness of the poetry and the 3D artwork	0 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10
The powerful use of words and images to express a message	0 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10
TOTAL		/40

Experimentation

“Enter if your dare...”

Your task is to write a suite of ten haikus that tell a story with the title “Enter if you dare...” Your haikus should build the **tension** as they tell a story.

You have to use “Imagination Haiku” by Lorraine Margueritte Gasrel Black to begin your suite of ten haikus.

Fallen trees cover

a cave or magic portal

enter if you dare

A haiku consists of three lines: Line 1 – 5 syllables; Line 2 – 7 syllables; Line 3 – 5 syllables.

One or two of the haikus must feature a **complication or challenge**. The **final haiku** must convey a **solution or resolution**. You also need a **message, theme or coda**.

Your haikus must feature descriptive and well-crafted language. You have to include at least **ONE** instance of auditory imagery created by onomatopoeia and alliteration, and at least **TWO striking verbs** that **create tension**.

Feature	Marks	Marks achieved
Has 10 haikus using the correct number of syllables	1	
Includes an interesting complication or challenge	0 - 2	
The haikus build the tension	0 - 2	
Includes an effective solution or resolution	0 - 2	
Effective use of descriptive language	0 - 2	
Auditory imagery created by onomatopoeia and alliteration	0 - 2	
Two striking verbs that create tension	2	
Two challenging spelling words	2	
All grammar correct	2	
A striking message, theme or coda	0 - 2	
At least two ideas connected to the title “Enter if you Dare...”	0 - 2	
An engaging story told through the haikus	0 - 4	
A twist or unexpected ending	Bonus Marks! 2	
TOTAL		/25

manner. Therefore, it is essential that students' writing skills continue to be developed, enriched and stretched.

All too often students approach writing with trepidation and a reluctance to put pen to paper. We all have the potential to be creative and storytelling is an innate skill, yet too many individuals claim to be unable to write effectively.

A 2016 report from the Grattan Institute identified declining standards in a global context in literacy. The report found many of the Australia's students were incapable of reaching benchmarks set by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority for writing. NAPLAN tests have shown the writing ability of Australia's students has not improved since 2008. This is even more evident for narrative writing where students are not meeting the criteria of engaging an audience.

According to studies conducted in 2016 by the National Center for Educational Statistics and the National Center for Educational Progress in the United States, proficiency in writing is statistically the best single predictor of academic success in the first year of college. Yet, American research shows that students, from grade school to college, are not demonstrating essential writing skills, with an alarming majority unable to write at a proficient level. Even worse, students in many schools despite numerous interventions and targeted writing programs, are still achieving low writing scores. The research claims that students are spending fewer than three hours a week on writing, just 15% of what they spend watching television.

A 2010 study conducted by Writing in Digital Environments (WIDE) Research Center at Michigan State University asked college students about their attitudes and behaviors regarding writing. Students ranked sending text messages as the most valuable form of writing over all others. While academic writing did make the top three, the overvaluation of texting is a troubling sign that shows that today's students may have misplaced priorities.

A lack of solid writing skills impacts negatively on student grades, and takes a hefty toll on the economy. The United States National Commission on Writing estimates that the nation's

top companies spend more than \$3.1 billion a year on remedial training, and the various states spend \$221 million on writing training each year to bring employees up to level.

A counter argument is that we should not be using test scores to judge the writing ability of Australian students. Very few published authors would be happy about having to write a narrative in 30 minutes! The Australian Association for the Teaching of English does not consider that performance in a single "on demand" writing task that has to be completed in just 30 minutes in response to an arbitrarily imposed writing prompt is capable of comprehensively measuring students' writing competence. In 2014, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that *"The NAPLAN writing test was so hard this year that students' marks have slipped across the country and in NSW there has been a "substantial increase" in the number of students who will receive zero because the question was too confusing."* The article went on to quote the CEO of ACARA Rob Randall as saying *"The decline may be partly because the writing task didn't engage some students."*

The Design Challenge

It is obvious we need to find ways to improve Australian students' writing skills. Another consideration, is that we might need to find a more effective and reliable way to test students' writing skills.

Your team's design challenge is to generate an innovative and creative possible solution to this issue. You might design a new writing program for students at your school or devise a new way for NAPLAN to test students' writing skills. It is up to the team to be creative and innovative, whilst still being practical and realistic. You need to consider what will work in schools, and when and how your design proposal could be implemented.

The team will need to complete the following:

EMPATHISE (Ethical Decision-Making Framework) (15 marks)

This involves evaluating what 'ought to be done', through considering rights, obligations, fairness, the benefits and detriments for societies and other virtues. Reaching a final decision involves a degree of conviction and belief in what is 'the right thing to do'.

DEFINE (Design Brief) (15 marks)

Here, you must identify the problem, outline the ethical issues, evaluate the challenges and research findings, and identify possible solutions.

IDEATE (Reflection) (15 marks)

You must then reflect on their solutions and whether they will be viable. A preferable solution should be identified, and any unanswered questions should be addressed. Issues of implementation are also crucial to reflect upon.

CREATE (Prototype) (15 marks)

Finally, a design for how your ideas and solution will be disseminated must be produced. This could be a story-board, mind-map, diagram, model, narrative or any other appropriate medium. Critically, an audience must be able to understand the process of dissemination by examining this prototype.

Marking Guidelines (60 marks)

1. Ethical decision making framework (15 marks)

Questions	Limited	Sound	Outstanding	Total
1: At least two facts	0	1	2	
2: Identifies challenges	0	1-2	3	
3: States why it matters	0	1	2	
4: Identifies negative consequences	0	1	2	
5: Identifies positive consequences	0	1	2	
6: Demonstrates empathy	0	1	2	
7: Identifies impact on the wider community	0	1	2	
TOTAL				/15

2. Design Brief (15 marks)

Aspect	Limited	Sound	Effective	Outstanding	Total
Ideate: What –why it matters, challenges, ethical issues & the vision	0-1	2-3	4	5	
Research: Why - findings that support ideas & solutions	0-1	2-3	4	5	
Solutions: How – the question and possible solutions	0-1	2-3	4	5	
TOTAL					/15

3. Reflection (15 marks)

Aspect	Limited	Sound	Effective	Outstanding	Total
Ideation: Ideas	0-1	2-3	4	5	
Implementation: When, where & who?	0-1	2-3	4	5	
Dissemination: How to get the ideas adopted	0-1	2-3	4	5	
TOTAL					/15

4. Prototype (15 marks)

Aspect	Limited	Sound	Effective	Outstanding	Total
Originality and creativity	0-1	2-3	4	5	
Clarity and communication of ideas	0-1	2-3	4	5	
Appeal to an audience	0-1	2-3	4	5	
TOTAL					/15