2. Ampersand - the 27th letter

Duration: 2 weeks

Driving question

Could we justify adding a 27th letter to the alphabet?

Overview

By examining historical conventions for the use of the ampersand, students will investigate whether it is possible to create a new 27th letter by using the rules of type anatomy.

| Stage 5 outcomes |
| --- |
| A student: |
| 5.6 selects appropriate procedures and techniques to make and refine visual design artworks |
| 5.7 applies their understanding of aspects of practice to critically and historically interpret visual design artworks |
| 5.8 uses their understanding of the function of and relationships between artist – artwork –world – audience in critical and historical interpretations of visual design artworks |
| 5.10 constructs different critical and historical accounts of visual design artworks |

[Visual Design 7-10 Syllabus](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/visual-design-7-10) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2004.

Content

This sequence explores the historical use of special characters in typography. Students will study the contemporary use of special characters in the digital social media world, comparing it to its function in traditional print and on the qwerty keyboard. Students will then create a new graphic that functions as both a letter and a word.

Focus areas

* Shape and letterform
* Structural and historical frames
* Design, design world and audience.

| Cross-curriculum content and key competencies |
| --- |
| Information and communication technology |
| Work, Employment and Enterprise |
| Numeracy |
| Literacy |

Assessment

All activities require students to demonstrate their learning and are all assessment for learning activities.

Teaching and learning activities

Introduction

Students will:

1. work through **The 27th letter PowerPoint** as a class, completing the exercises below:
   1. slide two – guess and write a definition in their blog/visual design journal of what they think the symbol is and its function
   2. slide four – write a visual design journal/blog entry comparing the symbol on the slide to the modern ampersand
   3. slide five – discuss
   4. slide six – watch the two videos and complete sketching activity
   5. slide seven – complete the research activity on the [Ian Fleming website](http://www.ianfleming.com/27th-letter-competition/), [study the rules](https://www.thebookcollector.co.uk/the-27th-letter-rules) for the 27th letter competition, create an entry and document the process in their blog
   6. slide ten – answer questions 1-3 in their visual design journal and upload to their blog.
2. write and document all the special symbols they can think of. For example # $ @ % (only using typographic symbols – emoji’s will be explored later)
3. participate in a class discussion about the various symbols they thought of and their uses
4. using computers, find a list of the special characters available on a keyboard
5. in groups, research a selection of their favourite symbols
6. create an A3 poster (analogue or digital) that lists the special character and how and where it is used by designers
7. research the history of their chosen symbols and write a presentation for the class
8. present and discuss.

Design making

Materials required

* alphabet worksheet
* A3 or A2 blank paper
* Phone or digital camera.

Watch the clip [New letter for 'The' - Ћ - invented](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/10168804/New-letter-for-The--invented.html) (00:01:51).

Students will:

* think of a word that may be in use now, that has only been used in popular culture/media for a short amount of time. Words like groovy, cool, swell, rad, wicked etc. that come in and out of fashion
* complete the **alphabet worksheet**
* make a large poster of their word tracing over the created letters in the alphabet worksheet
* upload the poster to their blog with a description of the letter and its sound.

Communicate

Students will complete a digital blog/visual design journal documenting the ideas and processes used throughout this sequence. This can be completed through one-note, Class Notebook or [Google classroo](https://edu.google.com/k-12-solutions/classroom/?modal_active=none)m.

The blog/visual design journal should contain:

* the process and technical skills used in practical classes
* personal reflections about the practical activities
* information gained through investigations or class discussions
* answers to questions asked in class
* a glossary of new words and terminology with graphic examples
* and thoughts of the different techniques and types explored.

Differentiation

Extension

Teachers are encouraged to provide students with acceleration activities if required.

Students could:

* create a 1-minute promotional clip to introduce their new 27th letter design
* design a print advertising campaign for their letter
* write a blog post addressing the driving question.

Life skills

| Life skills outcomes |
| --- |
| LS.2 explores a variety of materials, techniques and processes |
| LS.3 explores the function of a variety of visual designers and audiences |
| LS.9 uses a range of materials, techniques and processes to make visual design artworks |

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Students could:

* create a table that includes all the shift/numbers of the qwerty keyboard. For example - !@#$%^&\*
* photograph signs that contain any symbols and explain them by presenting to the class with accompanying drawings.

Evaluate

Formative assessment can be used to determine learning progress throughout the lesson sequences. Teachers should informally assess a student’s level of understanding and adapt accordingly.

Reference list and resources

[Visual Design 7-10 Syllabus](https://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_sc/pdf_doc/visual_design_710_syl.pdf) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2004.

Ian Fleming 27th letter competition [www.ianfleming.com](http://www.ianfleming.com/27th-letter-competition/), accessed 10/12/2017.

The book collector - 27th Letter competition [www.thebookcollector.co.uk](https://www.thebookcollector.co.uk/the-27th-letter-rules), accessed 10/12/2017.

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Wikipedia 27th Letter [en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ampersand) ,accessed 10/12/2017.