

Are you talking to me? – Resources and activities

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Resource 1 – unit outline for students

Are you talking to me Stage 4, Year 7 5 weeks

A novel way to learn about resilience

Purpose of this learning

* The main purpose is for you get the chance to learn some strategies to help you as you start high school in a positive way.
* You will have a chance to explore the way people are different by reading, thinking about and writing a narrative.

Key questions of the unit

Do stories have the power to change the way we think or act?

Syllabus outcomes

A student:

* EN4-2A effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies
* EN4-3B uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts
* EN4-5C thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts
* EN4-7D demonstrates understanding of how texts can express aspects of their broadening world and their relationships within it.

What you will learn and do

Discover:

* how stories can teach you to be tough on the inside (this is called resilience)
* your ability to understand other people (this is called empathy)
* Samurai warrior culture in Japan

Do:

* read a novel called Samurai kids: white crane
* investigate how composers write effective stories
* practise these narrative skills to write your own story

How you show what you know and can do

Assessment for your learning – a 200–300 word story (week 1) plus 2–3 short tasks every week

Assessment as you are learning – a range of individual and group tasks (including written and spoken tasks) that show you are: (a) learning the various skills with narrative and (b) developing the ability to think deeply about resilience and empathy (weeks 1–4).

Assessment of what you have learned – an imaginative piece of writing that is engaging and empowering or inspiring (week 5).

Evaluation

You will complete a KWL chart throughout the learning unit. You will also complete a PMI chart at the end of your learning. You will have the chance to think about what you what learned and the positives and negatives of the learning tasks.

Resource 2 – scavenger Hunt

Fill out the table below

| Question | Your answer | Name | Name | Name |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| In what town do you live? |  |  |  |  |
| How do you get to school? |  |  |  |  |
| Name one type of animal you/your family owns. |  |  |  |  |
| Your favourite sport to play? |  |  |  |  |
| Favourite flavour ice-cream? |  |  |  |  |
| How many siblings do you have? |  |  |  |  |
| Name the last movie you saw? |  |  |  |  |
| What colour is your hair? |  |  |  |  |
| Name your favourite colour? |  |  |  |  |

Resource 3 – imaginative writing task

Write and imaginative short story in which you are the main character.

Write the story as though you are at school during an English class and your teacher refuses to teach you.

* Describe what happens when your teacher first indicates that he or she is no longer going to teach you and give the reason for this
* Describe 2-3 things that you and your friends do to encourage your teacher to begin teaching again
* Describe the class in reasonable detail.

It might be humorous or serious, depending on your preferred writing style.

Follow this:

* Tense – present
* Narrative voice – first person
* Opening sentence – grab the reader’s attention
* Descriptive language – include the details from the Scavenger Hunt to help your description

Aim to make your writing descriptive.

Check this:

* Plan your story before you write (use the box provided below)
* Order your story with orientation, complication and resolution
* Paragraph your story
* Edit your story for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Short story feedback

For self, peer and/or teacher assessment

Name:

|  | Rarely/Not really | Sometimes/ A little bit | Mostly/ Quite a bit | Always/ Very |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Present tense |  |  |  |  |
| Opening sentence – attention grabbing |  |  |  |  |
| Descriptive language |  |  |  |  |
| Organised structure |  |  |  |  |
| Correct spelling |  |  |  |  |
| Correct punctuation |  |  |  |  |
| Controlled and clear writing style |  |  |  |  |

Comments

Resource 4a – seven virtues of Bushido

Bushido means literally the military-knight ways - the ways which fighting nobles should observe in their daily lives as well as in their vocation; to be short, the precepts of knighthood.

What characterised these samurai and supported their action and knowledge of right and wrong is what we now popularly call the ‘bushido code’ or the seven virtues of bushido. Some of the virtues, such as benevolence, politeness and truthfulness, are inspired by the teachings of Confucius.

The kanji of the seven virtues and their spirit

1. Gi – right action, duty

*Gi* has two parts: the upper part represents a sheep, which was the symbol of beauty in ancient China, and the lower part is the character for I, with a strong slanting stroke on the left which represents a halberd. The character could be explained as understanding (sheep) after conflict (halberd).

*Gi* is to do the right thing.

1. Yuuki – courage

*Yuuki* has two kanji. The first is yuu, which means courageous, with the important component of chikara, the symbol strength.

The second kanji is *ki* or energy.

*Yuuki* means brave, courageous energy.

1. Jin – benevolence

*Jin* has two parts: on the left side stands the character for human and on the right, there are two horizontal strokes which represent the number two. *Jin* is one of the most fundamental virtues of Confucianism, which could be defined as to treat each other with tenderness, to love each other.

*Jin* is the benevolence that unites each human being to the other.

1. Rei – politeness or morality

The kanji for *rei* is a modern abbreviated form, which does not reveal very much of the ancient character. The ancient symbol shows a sacrificing vessel that evokes the rites and ceremonies conducted for worshipping and offerings. The character actually means rite or ceremony but in a broader sense it means respect.

*Rei*, too, is essential to Confucianism: In society *rei* governs your actions towards others, a fundamental politeness, very much related to *jin*.

It is often translated with morality, but as morality has other connotations, politeness is more appropriate.

*Rei* is politeness, respect shown in social behaviour.

1. Makoto – truthfulness

The kanji for *makoto* is composed of two parts: at the left stands the character for to speak, a mouth that produces words. At the right stands the character *sei*, which means to accomplish, to succeed.

*Makoto* means truth in word and action, to follow truly the Law of the Universe.

1. Meiyo – honour

*Meiyo* has two kanji. The first is *mei*, which means reputation, with the symbol of mouth below. The second kanji is *yo*, which means to praise or to admire, which has the component of ‘to say’.

*Meiyo* is to enjoy a good reputation, honour.

1. Chuugi – loyalty

*Chuugi* has two characters. The first one is *chuu* which means to be sincere or loyal. This character expresses very well the true meaning of loyalty. We see a heart and on top of it the symbol for middle. *Chuu* could be understood as no conflict in the heart, faithful to what is felt in the heart.

The second kanji is *gi*, which means right action or duty.

*Chuugi* is to act faithfully, to be loyal.

Resource 4b – abstract nouns

A noun is a person, place or thing; however, the 'thing' might be an intangible concept – which means it is an abstract form of a noun. An abstract noun is a type of noun that refers to something a person cannot physically interact with - it exists but not in a concrete way. A noun that is abstract is an aspect, concept, idea, experience, trait, quality, feeling (or anything else!) that cannot be experienced with the five senses.

The seven virtues of Bushido

The seven virtues of Bushido are examples of abstract nouns. Find a definition for each virtue in the dictionary and choose three words in the box as synonyms.

Word bank

goodness

integrity

valour

compassion

esteem

sincerity

reputation

kindness

distinction

truthfulness

admiration

faithfulness

trustworthiness

resolution

generosity

dependability

bravery

righteousness

authenticity

deference

nobility

| Virtue | Synonym 1 | Synonym 2 | Synonym 3 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rectitude |  |  |  |
| Courage |  |  |  |
| Benevolence |  |  |  |
| Respect |  |  |  |
| Honesty |  |  |  |
| Honour |  |  |  |
| Loyalty |  |  |  |

Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs

Match the term to its definition

noun

verb

adjective

adverb

a doing, saying, thinking or relating word

describes a verb

describes a noun

names a person, place or thing

What is it doing now?

Whether a word is a noun, a verb, and adjective or an adverb depends on how it is being used in a sentence. Each of the sentences below contains the word light or a word built from light. Decide whether it is being used as a noun, verb, adjective or adverb. Write your answers on the line.

Ben used a match to light the candle

There was a light breeze blowing

We had lightly dusted the bench top with flour

Turn out the light!

Forming adjectives, comparatives, superlatives and adverbs

In the previous exercise we saw how an ending, -ly, was added to the word light to give it the correct form in the sentence. The words more or less and most or least are used in front of longer adjectives to show degree. Other adjectives use the endings -er or -est for the same purpose. (Complete the table below for examples of virtues) –

| Noun | Adjective | Comparative | Superlative | Adverb |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Happiness |  | Happier |  | Happily |
|  |  |  |  | Bravely |
|  | Resilient |  | Most resilient |  |
| Goodness |  |  |  | Well |

Resource 5 – ‘Winning Without Hands’

A parable is a simple story intended to highlight a positive human quality or attitude. ‘Winning Without Hands’ is a parable and achieved its present form in Japan in about the seventeenth century. The story involves two characters and a single episode.

It is said that the famous swordsman Bokuden was one day crossing Biwa Lake on a ferry-barge crowded with passengers. The passengers were headed to some temple festival, all of them humble folk, tradesman and peasants, except himself and a two-sword man, young, but of huge build and with the high-nosed attitude of a tyrant.

Now, the barge was very crowded and the crossing was rough, the boat rocking with the motion of the water. It happened that midway through the trip, one of the tradesmen passengers accidentally touched the scabbard of the young samurai’s long-sword with his sandal.

The samurai flew into a towering rage and snarled, ‘Get away, you clumsy oaf! How dare you touch your filthy footwear against my steel!’

The poor wretch fell to the ground in terror, crying, ‘Oh, noble! Forgive my unpardonable awkwardness; it was the evil rocking of the boat, not from any disrespect of dignity.’

But the swordsman, unappeased, kicked him with his foot, and snatched his short-sword as if to run him through.

Bokuden, who was standing near, caught the samurai’s sleeve and said, ‘No, sir, let your anger cool before you do something that you will regret tomorrow. The offense was not intended and the man has apologised.’

The other turned on Bokuden, exclaiming, ‘Who are you to involve yourself – unasked – in my business?’

Bokuden replied, ‘I am, as you can see, a two-swordsman like yourself and I speak in simple justice.’

Growled the young samurai, ‘Take care, or you will find yourself with this fool’s offense on your own shoulders, and my blade in your carcass instead of his!’

Said Bokuden mildly, ‘One can only trust to his own poor skill and the integrity of his intention.’

‘Skill?’ sneered the young samurai. ‘So you think yourself a swordsman! Know that I am a master of the School Invincible. I need to teach you a lesson in both swordplay and manners!’ So saying, he brandished his weapons and indicated for Bokuden to draw.

Bokuden replied, ‘As for me, I am a deficient student of the School of Winning-Without-Hands. But how can you talk of a duel here on a crowded barge with no room for movement? We will reach the shore soon enough.’

‘So!’ mocked the braggart. ‘Your words, I think, do not reflect your inclination!’

Now the barge was at the moment near an islet – a tiny patch of sand and brambles – and Bokuden said to the rowers, ‘Turn there.’ This they did, and when the boat’s bow grated on the pebbles, the arrogant samurai leaped ashore, shouting to Bokuden to follow him. Bokuden seized an oar, as if he intended to vault to the bank, but instead, with one mighty shove he pushed the barge out into the lake. When the swashbuckler turned and realised the craft was out of reach, and that he was abandoned on the island, he was afire with fury. ‘Come back, you coward, to your punishment!’

But Bokuden replied, ‘No. Did I not say that I was of the School of Winning-Without-Hands? To beat you, I do not need to draw a blade.’ To the rowers he said, ‘Do not pay attention to his empty threats, but continue to your destination. And you can be sure that I have been merciful to that self-important ruffian – know that my name is Bokuden.’

When the passengers heard this – for Bokuden was the most renowned among living samurai swordsmen – they all bowed before him in admiration.

(Adapted from Tales from the Japanese Storytellers, edited by Harold G Henderson, published by Charles E Tuttle Company Inc., Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan, 1976, pp. 46-48)

Winning without hands – responding

1. What type of person is Bokuden?

List five characteristics to describe Bokuden and five to describe the other samurai. Provide evidence (quotes) from the story to justify the statements.

Examples – merciful, humble, skilful, clever, calm, arrogant, cruel, confident, foolish, quick-tempered, brave, cowardly.

1. What are the differences between Bokuden and the other samurai in the way each speaks about themselves and towards other people? Give examples.
2. Bokuden states that, ‘I have been merciful to that self-important ruffian’

What are two alternative ways that Bokuden might have reacted to the situation?

1. Explain how the message in this story might relate to a situation at school today.
2. How is ‘winning’ usually measured? What does this story suggest about winning?

Writing task

Choose one of these tasks to complete an imaginative response to the story ‘Winning without Hands’:

* Write a letter from the passenger to thank Bokuden for his assistance.
* Write a journal entry as the other samurai, discussing the events.
* Write an interview between Bokuden and the author of the story.

Speaking task

Hot seating –

In groups, students adopt the role of one of the characters within the story – Bokuden, the passenger, the other samurai, an observer – and is questioned by the others about his/her background, motivation and behaviour.

Resource 6 – book covers

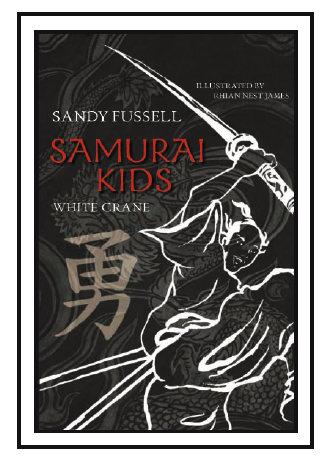
They say “You shouldn’t judge a book by its cover.”

However, it is often the cover of a book that makes us choose a particular title. For this reason, publishers often spend a lot of time designing covers.

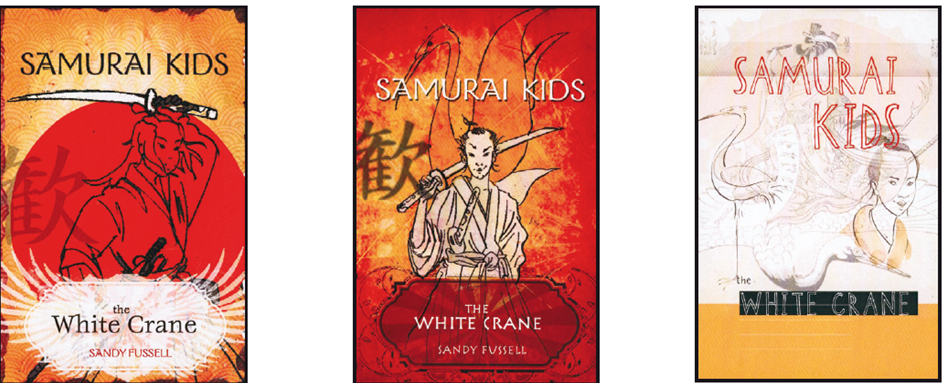
Here are some of the early cover designs for ‘White Crane’. Compare them with the final cover.

* Which do you like the most? Why?
* What do you think makes an effective cover?
* What elements do you think would be important to feature on the cover of ‘White Crane?’
* Design your own cover for ‘White Crane’

Final cover–



Three initial designs for ‘Samurai kids: white crane’



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http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/statics/dyn/1341278173386/Samurai-Kids-Book-1-White-Crane-Classroom-Ideas.pdf

Resource 7 – direct and indirect speech

In a narrative, characters use direct or indirect speech.

Direct speech

Uses special punctuation when writing down words that are spoken. Note:

* use of quotation marks
* precise use of pronouns (I, he, she, they, we)
* written exactly as it is spoken
* punctuation goes inside the quotation marks
* each piece of dialogue is written on a new line.

Example – ‘The cockroach is mightier than the dragon,’ said Sensei.

Indirect speech

Is when the words are reported without using the exact words spoken. Note:

* use of ‘that’ to introduce indirect speech
* no quotation marks
* pronouns may change
* does not have to be written exactly as spoken
* no extra punctuation is used because the tone of the sentence is given by how the words are ‘said’.

Example – Niya hesitantly suggested that maybe Sensei was a Tengu goblin.

Practising indirect speech

Rewrite the following sentences as indirect speech.

‘Cockroaches are only small but they are very hard to kill,’ Sensei said.

‘Sensei, what is the samurai way?’ asks Niya.

Kyoko replied, ‘I love honey rice pudding, too!’

Practising direct speech

Rewrite the following sentences as direct speech.

Sensei explained that a samurai must discipline himself so his body does not question what his mind decides.

Taji asked Sensei if he were sure that it will rain soon.

The komasu announced that the past must be visited to learn the future.

Your turn

Indirect speech – write something that your parents always say to you.

Direct speech – write a favourite saying by Sensei.

Tone

The words and punctuation chosen when describing how someone says something can change the meaning. Write four different ways of saying ‘yes’ to the question, ‘Will you marry me?’

* Uncertainty

* Excitement

* Anger

* Resignation

Tone is also created by the verbs used to describe the way the words are spoken. This should help you create expressive voices for your characters as you read.

‘I’m sick of coming last,’ moans Kyoko.

This shows that Kyoko is disappointed and frustrated that she often comes last in competition. It is easy to imagine her voice moaning long and deep.

Take turns reading these phrases out loud to a partner:

* ‘Why do we have to be the Cockroach Ryu?
* Why must we have a wretched name?’
* Yoshi is big and his voice booms even when he whispers.

Yoshi feels

We changed our voices by

‘Come on, Mikko,’ I complain.

Niya feels

We changed our voices by

‘What about me?’ Kyoko grins. ‘The brush is too short for my extra finger.’

Kyoko feels

We changed our voices by

‘Ni winsI’ Kyoko announces.

Kyoko feels

We changed our voices by

Resource 8 – increase your word power with ‘Samurai kids: white crane’

As you read the novel, take note of words you don’t know. You should be aiming to collect at least one word every 10 pages. You will be challenged to use some of these words when you write your own story. Complete each cell as you collect the words. Also, learn how to spell your new words – you will be tested on them later in the unit.

| Word | Definition | Part of speech (eg. verb) | Write in sentence |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Stooped (page 10) | Bend one’s head or body forward and downward | Verb | The mother stooped low to pick up the wailing baby. |
|  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |

Resource 9 – humour

What is funny?

Students write down or pair/share orally some of the jokes, comedy situations or incidents from the novel that they have found funny, then try to explain why they found these things funny. As small groups, students identify similarities or patterns in what others say about what is funny. Discuss these observations as a whole class – recording their ideas on the board.

Types of humour

Sources of humour likely to be identified by students include:

* something unexpected happens
* someone says something unexpected
* something terrible happens to someone else
* something embarrassing happens to someone else
* someone does something silly, awkward or clumsy

Students read each of the comedic extracts from the Samurai Kids. Discuss how the humour is operating in terms of the above ideas. Similarities and differences in interpretation are noted.

Techniques for creating humour

Define and provide examples of some or all of these techniques:

* pun
* slapstick
* parody
* irony
* incongruity
* self-deprecation
* subverting expectation

Reasons for humour

Scavenger hunt: students find examples from a range of texts (cartoons, written extracts, short films, advertisements, poetry supplied by the teacher) that use humour for each purpose:

* humour for fun
* humour that breaks down taboos
* humour that deals with fear or intolerance
* humour as resilience
* humour to communicate an important message

This activity could be restricted to examples from chapters 1-3 in the novel

The audience

The class discusses the following questions.

* Would all age groups and all groups in society find the example funny?
* What are some examples indicating that the humour is aimed at particular people?
* When might groups disapprove of the humour or not 'get' the humour?

(Adapted from: <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/Humour.pdf>)

Humour – ‘Samurai Kids’

‘Oy. Aye-yah. Oy!’ I cry. I kick high and land solid on my foot. Perfectly. Hopping around in excitement, the White Crane dances on one leg.

‘Well done,’ Sensei calls.

Taji joins our teacher in the sun. ‘Great landing, Ni’

‘How did you know?’ I ask Taji later at dinner.

‘There is nothing wrong with my ears,’ he retorts. ‘I am used to the sound of you hitting the dirt. Face first. Splat! Butt first. Phlat! This was a new sound. One I’ve never heard before.’ He laughs at me but it doesn’t hurt the way it does when others laugh.

Samurai Kids, pp. 16-17

Sensei says a true swordsman doesn’t need a blade.

‘The point of a sword is…’ Sensei pauses mid-sentence to make sure we are all paying attention.

I know this one. The point of a sword is to defend with dignity.

‘The point of the sword is very sharp,’ Sensei says.

That’s true, too.

Samurai Kids, p. 23

‘You’re not the only sword maker on this island,’ the Dragon hisses as he bends to pick up his swords. When he stands upright, he is directly in front of Onaku, almost touching. Despite the fire, there’s a coldness in the air.

‘They say Master Yuri makes a sword that can split the hair on a man’s head.’ The Dragon’s words spit and splatter in the Sword Masters’ face.

Onaku shrugs and wipes the spittle from his cheeks.

‘If you wish to take up hair cutting, it’s none of my business. My swords are for splitting a man’s head, not trimming his hair.’

Samurai Kids, p. 72

The world is a strange place when the wisest and holiest of priests is an old man in a pink dress. Wisdom must be colourblind, with no fashion sense.

The priest bobs and nods his head in welcome. He says NOTHING. It’s the Zen thing but it’s probably easier just to nod when you wear a basket from head to should.

Samurai Kids, p.182

Samurai study how to be polite. It’s part of the Bushido code.

‘It is important to show good manners,’ Sensei teaches. ‘You should always say please and thank you when chopping off an opponent’s body parts.’

Samurai Kids, p.198

Taji is telling his favourite joke.

‘I see said the blind man who didn’t see at all.’ A good joke lets you laugh at yourself and it doesn’t hurt when other people do too.

Samurai Kids, p. 210

Resource 10 – assessment for learning

Student reading ability

The 3 key aspects of reading should be measured:

* accuracy
* fluency
* comprehension

Photocopy an excerpt from Samurai kids: white crane – one per student. This should be approximately 200 words in length. Mark out the first 100 words (precisely).

Accuracy

This is a measurement of the number of words read accurately in a text. If accuracy is less than 90% it is considered ‘frustration’ level and will do just that. Students reading a text at this level require support (a recording or someone to read to them). On the photocopied 100 word sample, tick or cross each word as it is read. DO count words that are read incorrectly but then corrected. Once reading is completed deduct the number of incorrectly read words from 100. This will give you a percentage score.

Fluency

Fluency is essential for reading comprehension and enjoyment. This can be done simultaneously with the accuracy check. Simply run a stop watch for one minute then count the number of words read by the student. A fluency score over 140 is desirable (As a guide, 120 is appropriate for Year 5 students).

Comprehension

Even if accuracy and fluency appears adequate, it is still worth checking reading comprehension. 4-5 literal and inferential questions about the passage will help guide your assessment of this aspect. Use a range of 5Ws and a H questions – avoiding interrogative ‘why’. Students should be able most questions with some ease.

In the following using the Fluency Rubric will allow teachers to record accuracy, fluency and other reading habits. Comprehension questions could be recorded on the same sheet.

Fluency rubric

Student’s name

Date

Passage

Words read in one minute minus words read incorrectly = fluency score –

Accuracy–

4 90%-100% correct

3 80%-89% correct

2 70%-79% correct

1 Less than 70% correct

Expression–

4 Reads with natural, conversational expression

3 Expression is usually good; pays attention to punctuation

2 Little expression; seldom pays attention to punctuation

1 Reads in a monotone, with no regard to punctuation

Speed–

4 90%-100% of goal

3 80%-89% of goal

2 70%-79% of goal

1 Less than 70% of goal

Pace and phrasing–

4 Pace and phrasing are appropriate and match the meaning of the text

3 Mostly reads at a good pace and groups words into phrases

2 Reads haltingly; only groups familiar phrases

1 Reads word-by-word

Resource 11 – metaphors

Potato lesson – instruction for teachers

Potatoes used to explore diversity and similarities between people. Adapted from [Racismnoway teaching resources](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/anti-racism-activities/lesson_ideas/20001010_20.html).

Ingredients

* Potatoes (at least one per student)
* Paper and pens
* [Racism: No Way!](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/)

Method

* Take one potato from the bag, show it to the class and throw it back in the bag.
* Ask a student to find that particular potato.
* Discuss why s/he can’t find that exact potato (possible response: all potatoes look the same).
* Introduce a potato to the class, focusing on physical characteristics.
* Distribute potatoes, one per student. Students have one minute of complete silence to become acquainted with their potato.
* Ask students to introduce their potato to the class (no more than 30 seconds).
* Return all potatoes to the bag.
* Discuss how their own potato was different to all the others.
* Instruct students to find their potato from the bag (to date, all found successfully).

Discuss/write

* Why were you successful at finding your potato?
* How are potatoes the same? (shape, taste, edible, same under skin)
* How are potatoes different? (location grown, colour, dishes it’s good for, size)
* What can we compare potatoes to? Explain. (people)

Variations

To promote empathy and engagement, students may draw facial features and other characteristics on the potato; write a story about the potato’s holiday, etc.

Extension

Read and discuss a selection of [Ramp Up](http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/) articles about the importance of language when discussing human rights and issues.

Definition of metaphor

Students record in a suitable way (e.g. with other English metalanguage in book)

Metaphor: A comparison where one thing is said to be another. It assists understanding by creating an image. It often appeals to the reader on a personal level as it relates to the reader’s own experiences’ e.g. The children are little treasures. The moon is a silver medallion. Potatoes are the people here in this room. The Samurai kids are cockroaches.

Explain/discuss how metaphors can help us to understand complex ideas.

Cockroaches True or False handout

Students mark on the handout what statements they believe are true regarding cockroaches. Reveal the factual items (1, 3, 4, 5, 8 & 9.) Students note on their own sheets e.g. by highlighting.

Write this explanation of this metaphor on the True/False handout:

‘Some people think cockroaches are really gross bugs but there’s a reason Sensei Ki-Yaga named his school the Cockroach Ryu. Being called a cockroach can be a compliment! Cockroaches are not only one of the strongest creatures in the world, but they create a feeling of fear among people. This metaphor helps us see that while the Cockroach Ryus are small and look weak, they have hidden talents which will frighten their opponents.’

Students create their own extended metaphor for people

A ‘cracked bowl’ metaphor:

‘A cracked bowl can hold water. There is nothing wrong with the bowl. It just needs to be held properly.’ Sensei instructs.

‘Huh?’ says Mikko.

Mikko’s brain doesn’t like to think unless it has to.

‘He means we are just as capable as everyone else. Maybe even better, with the right teacher,’ says Taji.

Samurai Kids, pp.14-15

Students write their own explanation of this metaphor – as per modelled explanation of cockroaches.

Optional ideas

* Metaphor reinforcement worksheet – source supplementary material at students’ level from Internet or teacher resources.
* Group work – students create anti-bullying posters that rely on a single metaphor to convey the message
* Students collect other metaphors from the novel and create a bank of metaphors with explanations. Highlight that many employ elements of Japan, e.g. ‘noodle balls of nostril hair’. Students could reflect on how this enhances the reading experiences. Students could extend to collect any type of example of imagery, e.g. simile: ‘eyebrows raised like pagoda rooftops’.
* Students write their own metaphors for how to be resilient when facing bullying. Illustrate if time allows.

True or false

A cockroach can

* survive radiation from an atomic bomb
* crawl backwards for 5 km
* run 3km an hour
* do 25 body turns a second – The animal kingdom dodging world record!
* go without food for a month
* drink 5 litres of water in 5 minutes
* weigh over 2 kilos
* live for a week without their heads
* hold their breath for 40 mins
* write a poem with their antennae

Cockroaches

Resource 12 – no one’s perfect – lesson plan for classroom

Watch the [clip of Ototake Hirotada playing baseball](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m3YkswjAho).

Verbally give background information using information from No One’s Perfect contextual resources: name, age, disability, his successes, plight of disabled people in Japan, bullying in Japanese schools. Explain that the following quotes are all phrases from Oto’s autobiography.

* Write on the board: ‘I always think that with the right environment, a person with physical handicaps like mine would not be disabled.’

Students note in their workbook, without discussion, whether they agree or disagree and their reasons.

* Write on the board – ‘It’s the present environment that makes people ‘disabled’.’

Ask students to arrange themselves along a true–false continuum you establish in the classroom. Ask for students to volunteer reasons that they have placed themselves where they are.

* Write on the board – ‘It also makes others feel sorry for us because all the things we ‘can’t do’ due to physical barriers.’
* Write about a time when you have felt sorry for someone with a disability.

Do these people deserve our pity?

* Write answers in workbook.

Discuss answers. Oto asserts that the reason for the pity is because the conditions people with disabilities live in – that society is created in a way that means they can’t function freely.

* Write on the board – ‘A society in which everybody can function freely.’

Is this ideal a reality? Write a list of things stopping society being able to build an environment that removes all barriers for every disability.

Excerpt

Hand out and read this excerpt and summary from No One’s Perfect –

Often a child passing me in the street will go, 'Look, that man has no arms and legs! Why, Mommy?' The flustered mother ducks her head to me in apology, then with a sharp 'Never mind, come on!' she drags the child away.

I always think: ‘Ah, what a shame. There goes a chance for one more person to get to know and understand people with disabilities. I want them to fire away with more questions, because it's the questions that aren't asked, and the questions that aren't answered, that form mental barriers. When they're cleared up and kids begin to feel at ease with disabled people, then we begin to see truly 'barrier-free' minds and hearts.’

Oto believes that the key to removing physical barriers is to remove ‘barriers of the heart’.

Have you ever had the experience of seeing a disabled person in difficulty but not known what to say or how to offer help? Oto says it's unfamiliarity that makes people hesitate like that and end up walking on by. Afterward, they're often disgusted with themselves, wondering why they didn't speak up. But Oto doesn’t think they should blame themselves.

‘With so few opportunities for contact, however, it may be close to impossible for most Japanese to get used to being around disabled people. And so I think that children's experiences hold the key.

Children don't yet have mental barriers in place. When I appear before a school group to give a talk, after an initial flurry of excitement, the room becomes very quiet. The kids are goggle-eyed. But after I've spoken for half an hour, they'll start calling me 'Oto' while we're having lunch or playing a simple game together, and by the time I'm ready to leave, they'll be saying, 'Come back and see us again!'

Although they were wary of my weird appearance at first, they've realised that I'm an ordinary young man and they've let their guard down. Kids are very flexible in that way. It's adults who draw a line between 'the disabled' and 'the able-bodied.' In the world of children, anything is possible.’

Respond by writing

* Write three ways children could be educated to be familiar with people who have disabilities. What would the educators need to make sure they do or don’t do?
* Read the extract from the autobiography Being Ourselves. Brief discussion to ensure deep understanding. Extended writing response (could be in journals or as a letter to a younger sibling/cousin offering advice, etc.):
* Write about a time when you thought you were being treated unfairly (because you were ‘different’) or discriminated against. Describe what happened, how you felt and how you reacted. Write the final outcome of the situation.
* Finally, using Oto’s advice to ‘value ourselves more’, write how you could have thought and acted differently if you had remembered to ‘know your worth’ and how the situation probably would have turned out if you had adjusted your way of thinking.

Being Ourselves

‘In order to dissolve our mental barriers, I think that, we need a willingness to let others be themselves. I expect the reason that disabled people are said to have easier lives in Western societies is because Westerners are willing to let other people be who they are. Where a great many ethnic groups live in one nation, as in the USA or parts of Europe, if you rejected others because they were different in the way that happens in Japan, there'd be no end to it. As one minority among many, disabled people tend to be viewed the same way: when seen from the viewpoint of 'diversity,' a disability is simply accepted as a trait of that person.

The Japanese, however, have always lived as an almost mono-ethnic nation. Sameness is the general rule, and people dread stepping outside its boundaries. Discrimination and prejudice await those who do. In such a society, it may not be easy for people with disabilities to be accepted.

Take the bullying that's a current problem in Japan, especially in junior higher schools. The reason kids give is nearly always, 'He's different from us in this or that way.' If they could learn to let others be themselves, most cases of bullying wouldn't happen. Of course the other kid is different – everybody is.

And the willingness to accept others begins with knowing your own worth. I started working on the barrier-free campaign because I felt there was something that only I could do. But I'm not the only one who's been given a part to play. All of us have something that only we can do. Some people find it while they're young, some come to it later. Some people probably look back as they approach death and realise, 'Ah, that was my role in life.' In my case, I guess I happened to catch on early because, in having a disability, I had a clear sign. But whether or not we know it yet, we each have our own part to play.

This is only common sense. One can search the world over and not find another person exactly like oneself. If each of us is unique, of course each of us will have a unique role. So we ought to value ourselves more. We ought to take more pride in ourselves.

Japanese children and teenagers today often dwell on what they see as their own imperfections (and they're probably not the only kids who do that). If they could just take pride in themselves as one-of-a-kind, irreplaceable beings, they would surely stop putting themselves down and making their own lives harder. And kids who can accept themselves will naturally be able to accept the next person for who he or she is, too - another being as unique and valuable as they are.

This acceptance would certainly go a long way toward creating a barrier-free society where people with disabilities could live more easily, but that's not the only reason why I want to see it happen. I'd like to see everyone live with a proud awareness of who they are so that they don't waste the life they've been given, but live it to the full.

As for me, I hope to be able to live with pride in myself by contributing in some small way to a world of 'barrier-free hearts.'

‘No One’s Perfect’ – resource for GAT

Included

* text
* contextual information (cultural, socio-political, geographical, historical)
* links and activities
* teacher advice

Texts

* ‘Barrier-free Hearts’
* Chapter from ‘No One’s Perfect’ by Ototake Hirotada

Shoes and Wheelchairs

One often sees a notice beside the elevators in Japanese department stores, libraries and other public places:

'Persons in wheelchairs please use only when accompanied.' But it's possible for me to do the whole series of actions - steering my power chair into the elevator, pressing the button for the floor I want, and getting off there - on my own. Do I really need someone to accompany me?

Such notices probably reflect a belief that it's dangerous for wheelchair users to be by themselves. Or perhaps the underlying idea is that the disabled are helpless people whom society must look after. But is there any truth in this assumption? A fundamental question which I'd like to look at here.

Sad to say, in Japan today it is hard for people with disabilities to move about freely, and it's not easy for us to live on our own. So there's no denying the fact that we need a great deal of help. But it's the environment that forces us into that position.

I always think that with the right environment, a person with physical handicaps like mine would not be disabled. When (as is mostly the case in Japan today) there are no elevators in train and subway stations, and I can't board a bus or take a taxi in my wheelchair, it becomes difficult, or even impossible, for me to get from point A to point B. I'm certainly 'disabled' then.

But suppose there was an elevator in every station; suppose trains were designed for easy boarding, with no gap or height difference between the edge of the platform and the floor of the car; suppose buses and taxis had lifts for wheelchairs. Then, in using the public transport system (which is all-important in Japanese cities), I would have no disability.

Generally speaking, the Japanese get into their shoes at the door as they leave the house; in my case, I get into a wheelchair instead. That's the only difference. As far as traveling from A to B under our own power is concerned, there's no difference at all.

It's the present environment that makes people 'disabled.' It also makes others feel sorry for us because of all the things we 'can't do' due to physical barriers.

When talking to children, I often say, 'Some of you wear glasses, right? Because your vision isn't perfect, right? I use a wheelchair because my legs aren't perfect.' They laugh and say, 'It's the same thing.' However, when I ask if they feel sorry for people who wear glasses, nobody does, yet when I ask, 'Do you feel sorry for people in wheelchairs?' just about everybody answers, 'Yes.'

'But you just told me it's the same as wearing glasses,' I say. 'Why feel sorry for the person in the wheelchair?' They answer, 'A person with bad eyesight can see just fine with glasses, but a person in a wheelchair still can't do a lot of things, so you really have to feel sorry for them.'

I think they've hit the nail on the head. What this means is that the conditions that make people with disabilities 'pitiful' can be changed - and when it comes to the number of pitiful people, of course, the fewer the better.

A society in which everybody can function freely: it may be a distant ideal, but the day has to come when it will be a reality.

Familiarity will do it

How to remove the physical barriers that are so hard on disabled people? I feel that the key is first to remove the 'barriers of the heart.' After all, we humans create the transport systems, the buildings, the streets and campuses. Depending on how well we understand and work with the needs of disabled people and the elderly, we can make the physical environment that we ourselves build as barrier-free as we want.

Where does that understanding and awareness come from? I think it's worth looking at the part played by familiarity.

Japanese readers may have had the experience of seeing a disabled person in difficulties at a station but not knowing what to say or how to offer help. It's sheer unfamiliarity that makes people hesitate like that and end up walking on by. Afterward, they're often disgusted with themselves, wondering why they didn't speak up. But I don't think they should blame themselves. Even now, you don't come across many disabled people in the streets or on the trains in Japan, and it's not easy to know how to approach people with whom you've had so little contact.

If a foreign family moves in next door, it may take a little while, but we eventually stop thinking of them as 'the ……s from wherever' and start thinking of them as 'our neighbours the …..s.' With so few opportunities for contact, however, it may be close to impossible for most Japanese to get used to being around disabled people. And so I think that children's experiences hold the key.

Children don't yet have mental barriers in place. When I appear before a school group to give a talk, after an initial flurry of excitement the room becomes very quiet. The kids are goggle-eyed. But after I've spoken for half an hour, they'll start calling me 'Oto' while we're having lunch or playing a simple game together, and by the time I'm ready to leave they'll be saying, 'Come back and see us again!'

Although they were wary of my weird appearance at first, they've realised I'm an ordinary young man and they've let their guard down. Kids are very flexible in that way. It's adults who draw a line between 'the disabled' and 'the able-bodied.' In the world of children, anything is possible.

This was true in my own days at kindergarten and primary school. The other kids were up- front with their questions: why, why, why? And as long as I was up-front too and gave them honest answers, they were happy to be my playmates. It was as if whether I had arms and legs or not was all the same to them.

Often a child passing me in the street will go, 'Look, that man has no arms and legs! Why, Mommy?' The flustered mother ducks her head to me in apology, then with a sharp, 'Never mind, come on!' she drags the child away.

I always think: ‘Ah, what a shame. There goes a chance for one more person to get to know and understand people with disabilities. Children are genuine: when they see a disabled person they want to know 'Why?', but once the mystery is solved they treat him like anybody else. I want them to fire away with more questions, because it's the questions that aren't asked, and the questions that aren't answered, that form mental barriers. When they're cleared up and kids begin to feel at ease with disabled people, then we begin to see truly 'barrier-free' minds and hearts.

My friends often say, 'It's true I was shocked the first time I saw you. I didn't know how to behave around you or what to talk about. But after we got talking in class and started going out for a bite to eat together, somewhere along the line I lost track of the fact that you're disabled. So it's only when someone says, ‘How about we all take a trip?’ that I go, ‘Oh, right, you're disabled, aren't you, Oto? So let's think about how you can come along in your wheelchair.’ '

I owe my friends for this, of course, but at the same time it's kind of an obvious thing. A particular disability may require special arrangements, but there's no special way of relating to a fellow human being just because he's disabled.

If people feel a higher than necessary barrier the first time they meet a disabled person, it can't be helped. But if time goes by and they still feel some barrier which can no longer be excused by unfamiliarity, personally, I think the disabled person is responsible.

Whether or not an able-bodied and a disabled person get along well together depends on their personalities and whether they're each other's type; it's no different from whether two nondisabled people get along.

And if a guy (or girl) is still hard to be around after you've known him for a while, there's no need to force yourself to be friends out of misguided sympathy. If he goes on about how you're discriminating against him, set him straight: 'It's your personality I can't stand!'

Being Ourselves

In order to dissolve our mental barriers, I think that, as well as familiarity, we need a willingness to let others be themselves. I expect the reason that disabled people are said to have easier lives in Western societies is because Westerners are willing to let other people be who they are. Where a great many ethnic groups live in one nation, as in the USA or parts of Europe, if you rejected others because they were different in the way that happens in Japan, there'd be no end to it. As one minority among many, disabled people in the West tend to be viewed the same way: when seen from the viewpoint of 'diversity,' a disability is simply accepted as a trait of that person.

The Japanese, however, have always lived as an almost mono-ethnic nation. Sameness is the general rule, and people dread stepping outside its boundaries. Discrimination and prejudice await those who do. In such a society, it may not be easy for people with disabilities to be accepted.

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As for me, I hope to be able to live with pride in myself by contributing in some small way to a world of 'barrier-free hearts'.

(Extract from 'Barrier-free Hearts' from No One’s Perfect, pp. 213–20, Kodansha International Ltd. Used courtesy of the author.)

Contextual Information

Cultural Context

A media star

Ototake Hirotada is a media star, a best-selling author and a social campaigner who currently works as a television sports commentator in Japan. His autobiography No One’s Perfect, published in 1998, sold four million copies. The work has been translated into many languages, including English. Ototake is very fashion conscious and professes to have a weakness for expensive Margaret Howell designer shirts. Just another successful young man in modern-day Japan, you might think - except when you realise that he has stumps in place of arms and legs and is about 60 centimetres tall!

Ototake Hirotada's childhood

Ototake Hirotada was born in 1976, without limbs. In his autobiography No One’s Perfect, he describes how his father, a successful architect, could not bring himself to let his young wife see their son when he was born because of the shock it would give her. Yet, when she at last set eyes on the baby, her first response was, 'Oh, he's so cute'. This response seems to have characterised his parents' attitude to him. From a very young age he had very little sense that his condition was pitiable. He grew up a brash, self-confident, almost cocky, kid, afraid of very little and willing to give all he had to every activity, just like a 'normal' child.

Ototake Hirotada's school days

Judging by the story he tells of his life in No One’s Perfect, Ototake Hirotada had a wonderful childhood. Surprisingly, for a child with no fingers or toes and stumps for arms and legs, school seems to have been the highlight of his early years. After some initial resistance from the school, he was admitted into a mainstream primary school. He was able to do his school work by writing with a pencil propped between his arm stumps and cheek. He ate with the other pupils, using a special spoon attached to his plate. He cut paper by holding scissors in his mouth and operating them with his arm stumps. Initially the other children were curious about his condition, but the novelty soon wore off and they accepted him in a most matter-of- fact way, making accommodations so that he could be included in all their activities.

Ototake Hirotada's sporting activities

Ototake Hirotada loves sport - not simply watching it, but participating in it. Considering he was born without limbs, his enthusiasm is extraordinary. In No One’s Perfect, he tells us how he learnt to walk and even run by shuffling along on his bottom and placing his thighs flat on the ground. He mastered the art of skipping, took part in a 50-metre race and played baseball with his school mates. In high school, he joined a basketball club and even made the team! Although he could not shoot baskets, he became an expert dribbler. As he was only about half a metre tall, his dribble was very low - about the height of most people's calves - and the opposition found it hard to win the ball from him. He named his special dribble the 'subterranean dribble'.

Socio-political Context

The plight of disabled people in Japan

Japan is an economic superpower, second only to the United States. One would expect it to have state-of-the-art facilities for disabled people. Unfortunately this is not the case. Very little accommodation is made for people with disabilities or impairments. Most buildings lack wheelchair access, and Japanese train stations and subways usually do not even have lifts. This means that the elderly and the physically disabled cannot travel about freely. When Ototake travelled to the United States as a youth, he thought it a veritable heaven for physically disabled people. As a college student at Waseda University, he joined the struggle for a 'barrier-free' campus. The campaign resulted in a new building being built with lifts and toilets for physically disabled people. Ototake has become a leading champion of the physically disabled in Japan. Through his lectures to school children and his television appearances, he has done much to raise awareness of the problems faced by disabled people in Japan.

Bullying in Japanese schools

In No One’s Perfect, Ototake Hirotada gives some of the reasons he believes Japanese people discriminate against the disabled. He believes that because Japan is, on the whole, a homogenous society, it does not tolerate difference (a popular saying in Japan is 'a nail that sticks out gets banged down'). He believes that the imperative to conform is the major cause of bullying (ijime) in Japanese schools. Ijime has become a serious problem in Japanese schools. Tens of thousands of cases of ijime are reported in schools each year, and each year several students commit suicide because of the ceaseless tormenting they experience. A favoured form of ijime is to exclude someone from the group and to make the person feel as if he or she does not belong. Bullying takes many forms, both physical and mental, and is as common among girls as among boys. It is striking that Ototake himself seems to have experienced no bullying at all, being instead warmly welcomed by his classmates and included in their activities.

Japan's group spirit

It is generally believed that Japanese people, unlike Westerners, favour the group over the individual. A team player is appreciated more than a solo star, and team spirit more than individual ambition. This is perhaps why Ototake Hirotada's classmates were able to accommodate him and include him in their sporting activities, even though he slowed proceedings down considerably. Cooperativeness, reasonableness and understanding of others are the values most appreciated in Japanese society, not personal ambition and self- assertiveness. Japanese people identify closely with their own in-group and will make many sacrifices for it, but they can be quite indifferent and even cruel to members of the out-group, total strangers who have nothing to do with them. Ototake describes how, at a train station, bystanders may well see a disabled person in trouble and yet not know how to approach that person to offer help.

The search for individualism

In No One’s Perfect, Ototake Hirotada expresses deep admiration for Western society, where he believes people have a much better chance of being allowed to be themselves. He believes that because the United States and parts of Europe are multi-ethnic societies, there is a greater awareness of cultural and other differences and a recognition that these differences must be allowed to flourish. In Ototake's observations, we can detect a genuine problem that faces Japanese youth today. After Japan's defeat in World War II, the Japanese people had to work incredibly hard to rebuild their nation. In the last four decades, Japan has become a highly affluent society. Japan's youth no longer think of self-sacrifice for the nation and do not want to work as hard as their parents. They are in pursuit of individual happiness, and freedom from conformity. Increasingly, Japanese young people choose to not be part of a group, preferring rather to 'go it alone'. There is also a more individualistic sense of fashion among youngsters. The group mentality that so long characterised the Japanese people no longer sits comfortably with today's youth.

Geographical Context

Tokyo's history

Ototake Hirotada's autobiography No One’s Perfect is set in Tokyo - a vast, sprawling metropolis. Tokyo has a long history. In the 17th century it grew from a mere village into the headquarters of the military ruler, or shogun, of Japan. In the mid-19th century, when Japan started to modernise, Tokyo was the first city to build broad avenues. During World War 11, Tokyo was severely bombed and much of the city was destroyed. Most of what we see in Tokyo today has been rebuilt, although the Ginza area still bears some of the marks of the 19th-century development.

Tokyo in the 21st century

Tokyo is a thriving metropolis. Its skyscrapers, glittering neon signs, loud music and many pinball-machine parlours assault the senses. Every building in the shopping districts has a different store on each floor, including the basement. There are fast-food chains, little sak6 bars, noodle shops and exclusive restaurants - something to suit every taste. At the same time, despite the crowds and fast pace of city living, many areas of Tokyo still manage to have a neighbourhood feel to them. Ototake grew up in one of the older parts of Tokyo, Kasai, which is in Edogawa ward in the eastern part of the city. His family introduced him to all the neighbours when he was a baby and so he knew them all well. When he was at high school Ototake moved with his family to the more exclusive neighbourhood of Takadanobaba.

Historical Context

The growth of consumerism

Japan's rapid economic growth in the last four decades has transformed a nation ravaged by World War 11 into the second largest economy in the world, after the United States. Japan's affluent young men and women are avid consumers, unlike their parents and grandparents who lived in a less materialistic age. One of the striking features of the new Japan is the way in which it is linked with the United States and other parts of the world in a globalised, capitalist market. Fast foods, designer brands, electronic goods, and commodities of every description have flooded the Japanese market. Shopping has become one of the most important pastimes. Ototake Hirotada is very much part of this new generation of young Japanese people, who do not seem to have serious financial problems.

Japan and fashion

Ototake Hirotada, although severely disabled, is still like every other young Japanese person - addicted to fashion. Young men and women are the most dedicated shoppers. Most of them live with their parents. They do not have to contribute to the household, and any money they make through part-time work is spent solely on their own pleasure - clothes, accessories, manga (comic books), music and food. In No One’s Perfect, Ototake describes how he is willing to risk going out in a blizzard in his wheelchair in order to make it to the annual Margaret Howell designer sale. The shopkeeper in turn admires him for his commitment to high fashion! Ototake's love of fashion is unusual in Japan, where physically disabled people usually lack the self-confidence and self-esteem to make fashion statements.

Sport in Japanese life

Like Australians, Japanese people are sport mad. Traditional sports include sumo (a traditional form of wrestling), kendo (fencing), aikido (a martial art) and judo (another martial art). However, the most popular sports are baseball and, lately, soccer. When Japan qualified for the 1998 World Cup, the entire nation erupted in jubilation. Japan regularly participates in a variety of sports in the Olympics and wins impressive victories. Ototake Hirotada is passionate about sport. This would not be extraordinary if not for the fact that he is severely disabled and has stumps for arms and legs. Yet, overcoming his disability, he participated in running, baseball, basketball and swimming at school and is now a television sports commentator.

Popular culture

Since the 1980s, Japan has become a consumer's paradise and Japanese society is shaped by its popular media. In ‘No One’s Perfect’, Ototake Hirotada describes how his father tries to hum along with pop stars on television 'when he doesn't even know the latest hits'. In this new Japan, distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture are rapidly vanishing and a large number of both young and middle-aged Japanese people no longer read 'serious' fiction, but rather manga, or comic books. There is an endless variety of manga, on subjects ranging from food, fashion and sport to economics, history and even government policy - all catering for particular readerships, whether they be young boys or girls, or adult men or women. Animated films, or anime as they are called in Japan, are often adapted from manga and are one of Japan's most celebrated cinematic forms, enjoying widespread popularity - in Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and, increasingly, in the West.

Links and activities

Links

* Read about a man's discovery that his child is deformed in Oe Kenzaburo's ‘A Personal Matter’.
* Read about diary photography, another way young Japanese people are telling their stories.

Activities

* What are the ‘barriers of the heart’ described by Ototake Hirotada? Discuss this with your class after reading the extract.
* How accessible to disabled people are the facilities you take for granted in your world? Investigate how your school, local shopping centre, cinema, sports facilities and public transport cater for disabled people.   
  Write either:
  + a letter to a newspaper describing your findings and calling for improved access, or
  + a pamphlet outlining how your community is barrier free.
* 'Being different' is a familiar literary theme. Think about your own experiences of either 'being different' or knowing someone who is and explore this in writing.

(Voices & Visions from Japan CD-ROM, Copyright – Commonwealth of Australia, 2003)

Resource 13 – playback theatre process

What is playback theatre?

Playback theatre is a spontaneous improvised theatre involving a unique collaboration between performers and audience. The performance is led and facilitated by a conductor (in the classroom context, the teacher) who interacts with the audience, encouraging them to tell stories from their everyday lives. Someone from the audience tells a story from their life, chooses actors (students) to play the different roles and then watches as their story is immediately interpreted and recreated. When treated respectfully, the participants, who have their stories retold, feel validation and empathy for their experiences and often see the event in a new light. It is an empowering experience for both parties.

Playback theatre builds relationship through the process of telling, listening to and performing personal stories. When an audience member moves to tell a story, it is a gesture of intimacy. The teller is inviting others into their world in an act of generosity which, in a suitable group climate, is likely to call forth generosity in the listeners. Teachers must foster a spirit of honour and respect for this process to be effective.

Telling a story in playback theatre is, to some extent, a process of co-creation. The conductor’s role is to accompany the teller, assist in shaping the story and, in a spirit of inquiry, to open out some of its aspects. At different points in the telling, the conductor will ask questions such as:

* What is a word to describe your neighbour?
* How did the shopkeeper respond?
* What were you thinking at this time?

So that the actors and the audience have a good enough understanding of the story. This inquiry has the effect of inviting reflection, of moving between different perspectives and building the complexity of the narrative. For playback theatre seeks to reflect the complexity of life rather than to simplify it.

Personal stories evoke feelings and stimulate the imagination. In the process of telling, both reflection and increase narrative imagination, complicate interpretive frames and multiply speaker and listener roles. (Condensed from Hutt, J, Hosking, B)

Five basic elements need to be in place:

* stories are volunteered
* the teller’s story is about her/his own experience and s/he watches the enactment
* stories are invited without prejudice or discrimination
* the form is spontaneous (no rehearsal)
* the stages of the technique are followed :
  + Stories are told (either told to whole group then re-enacted or two small groups of trusted peers)
  + The story is retold by actors who are chosen by the storyteller. The chosen actors understand the trust and honours with which they are being endowed.
  + the retelling is shaped by a conductor (teacher in role)
  + The group is given time to ask questions and the storyteller time to give feedback, comment and reflect.

Resource 14 – being a ‘good’ samurai

良い侍 – Yoi Samurai

A Good Samurai

| Skill | Grade A-E |
| --- | --- |
| katana (big sword) |  |
| jujutsu (unaided combat) |  |
| calligraphy (neat handwriting) |  |
| haiku (poetry) |  |
| origami (paper folding) |  |

A Good Samurai – calligraphy

Bushido, the samurai code, requires a samurai to be skilled not only in the art of war, but also in other arts, including origami (paper-folding), shodo (calligraphy) and haiku (poetry).

**義**

**勇**

**仁**

**礼**

**真**

**名誉**

**忠議**



[Kanji Stroke Order](http://thejapanesepage.com/kanji/stroke_order)

Haiku

A samurai must be able to write his own epitaph in the middle of battle in case of sudden death. It is not worth dying if no one knows about it.’

(Samurai Kids, p. 207)

Haiku is a form of unrhymed poetry that originally came from Japan. It uses rhythm to make its point. The first and third lines each have five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables (seventeen syllables in total).

I am first with five,

Then seven in the middle,

Five again to end.

The object of haiku is to capture a single moment in time, an object or a feeling and present it to someone else exactly as you experience it. Haiku is like a photo that captures the essence of what’s happening – often connecting two seemingly unrelated things.

On sweet plum blossoms

The sun rises suddenly.

Look, a mountain path!

By Basho

From our barbeque

Drifts smells of the ancestors

Singing to my tongue.

By Kris Hill

Haiku structure

Break lines into syllables using a slash (/). Write total number at end of line.

For example:

* A/sum/mer/moun/tain – (5)
* The/air/is/warm/and/fragrant – (7)
* Why/do/you/wear/snow? – (5)

Darkness falls again  
Lights illuminate the night  
Guiding us safely.

Cold winter morning  
(A) tickling chill bites his throat  
Some coughing smoke forms

Some of the lines in these haiku are either too short or too long. Work out the number of syllables in each word and each line, as before, and then try changing the poems so they are proper haiku.

Inside the small classroom,

The children are working quickly,

Some look quite sad.

The old woman waves goodbye

To her daughter who is leaving.

She is alone again.

Complete these Haiku

Either using the words at the end or one of your own.

Word bank – feet, watch, feed, quickly, her, more, screech, squawk, swirl, them, twirl, crunch, want, honking, home-time, walking

Brown leaves and

They underneath my

Autumn is here now.

Young birds and

Mother rushes to

They always

The school day drags on,

The teacher looks at

It is soon.

Cars sit, horns

People rush past them

Glad to be .

Write Haiku

Using the structure, write a haiku for the moment when the school bell rings in the afternoon.

Explore your natural world (nature hikes, nature photography, art) and write down what you see/hear/taste/touch/smell.

Examples of images:

* swooping magpies
* smell of canola in field of yellow
* hot, dry winds shaking the eucalypts
* screeching sulphur-crested cockatoos flocking in the empty, blue sky
* taste of first rain after years of drought

Describe what you see using exactly 50 words.

Although traditional haiku are often about nature or the changing seasons, they nonetheless manage to convey emotion. With just a few words, the haiku calls the reader’s attention to the story behind the observation. Try to appeal to the five seasons and include a seasonal reference. Imagery of the natural world of plants, insects, weather, and or atmosphere can highlight the moment of insight which inspires the poet to share perceptions and feelings.

Haiku poetry is very similar to photography or painting. It teaches the power of observation and the importance of editing. You know you’ve done a good job of editing when the version with the fewest words makes the strongest impression.

[How to Write a Haiku by Bruce Lanksy](http://www.poetryteachers.com/poetclass/lessons/haiku.html)

Worksheet

[Create your own Haiku](https://web.archive.org/web/20160412045304/www.getemreading.com/createyourownhaiku.doc)

Resource 15 – Ramp Up blog

We're not here for your inspiration

[An article by Stella Young Ramp Up – 2 July 2012](http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/articles/2012/07/02/3537035.htm)

Answer the following question below.

1. Is there anything in this article you don’t understand? Write it down.

1. Is there anything in this article you disagree with?

1. Share (with a pair, a group or the class) one interesting, new, unclear or difficult thing that you realised when you read this article. Can you explain what made it stand out?

Basic guidelines for appropriate language for people with disabilities

Make reference to the person first, then the disability. For example ‘a person with a disability’ rather than a ‘disabled person’

Activity

In this table, the ‘do not use’ words are out of place. Draw a line correcting the ‘Words with Dignity’ to the offensive language.

| With dignity | Do not use |
| --- | --- |
| The following are words that are affirmative and reflect a positive attitude. These are: | The following words have strong negative connotations |
| * disability * person who has multiple sclerosis * paraplegic (person with limited/no use of lower limbs) * quadriplegic (person with ltd/no use of all four limbs) * person who has cerebral palsy * person who has a speech impairment * person with a head injury * person with AIDS * person who has polio, has arthritis, etc * person with mental retardation * person with a learning disability * person with a mental disorder * person with an emotional disorder * person who is blind, partially * person who is deaf * person who is hard of hearing * sign language interpreter * born with… * caused by… * non-disable (referring to a non-disable person as normal insinuates that disable persons are not normal * person in a wheelchair * person who walks with crutches, walker, cane, limp etc. | * speech defect * handicap * AIDS victim * Stricken with multiple sclerosis * Spastic * Quad * Para * Dim witted slow * Crazy * The head injured * Crippled with polio, arthritis, etc * Blind guys, visually impaired * Deaf and dumb, deaf mute * Retard * Birth defect * Blind guys, visually impaired * Crippled with polio arthritis etc * Afflicted by * Hearing impaired * Normal * Confined/restricted to a wheelchair * Stricken with multiple sclerosis |

Note – many blind persons and deaf persons consider the words ‘visually impaired’ and ‘hearing impaired’ to be offensive. Blind simply means without the sense or use of sight. Deaf simply means partially or totally unable to hear. They believe these two words describe their situation best. They do not wish to be identified as diminished in strength or value as the word ‘impaired’ denotes.

Crutches, walkers and wheelchairs are mobility aids. Without the use of these mobility aids, the person may be restricted from participation in their community.

Created by C. Hendriks (from [dhr.disabilities@dhr.state.ia.us](mailto:dhr.disabilities@dhr.state.ia.us))

Role playing – what will you say?

The best way to be ready to speak up is to prepare. The more you and your students can identify stereotypes and explain why they are hurtful—or just inaccurate—the easier it will be to respond the next time you hear one. Remember, your response can have an impact.

Here are some prompts to get you started, along with background information to help you address the inaccuracies. Select scenarios relevant to your students’ context and print enlarged onto cardboard. Put in small groups and ask students to role-play solutions. Provide guidelines to indicate your expectations regarding appropriate treatment of others – refer to class/school rules.

A student holds up the corners of his eyes and says ‘Ching chang chong ching’ as a Korean student walks by.

Making fun of someone’s physical appearance, especially in cases where the traits being mocked are related to race, ethnicity or cultural background is dehumanising. The same holds true for mocking another language.

* How can a student bystander respond? What about an adult overhearing the taunt?

A parent is angry because your classroom is inclusive. ‘I don’t understand why my son has to do group work with a retarded boy. Why aren’t they in their own classroom?’

Because children use the word ‘retarded’ as a slur, it should be discouraged. The child has an intellectual disability. Australian Law makes it mandatory that all students have equal access to education which means inclusive classrooms are the law.

* How can you make it clear that you are attentive to the needs of his child and also appeal to the parent’s sense of fairness?

During a service project planting trees at a local park, you hear a group of students laughing as one of them complains, ‘Why are we doing this? This is what Aboriginals are for.’

The idea that any one ethnicity is particularly suited to any one profession is a form of stereotyping. Aborigines, like every other group of individuals, occupy a range of positions in a variety of industries. Students from middle-class, dominant-culture backgrounds may enjoy unearned advantages that allow them to feel above particular tasks, even those performed in the service of others.

* What does this student understand about stereotypes and privilege?

* What do those who were laughing understand about them?

On the way to lunch, you hear a girl say to her friends, ‘C’mon bitches, let’s go eat.’

When the targets (in this case women and girls) of a pejorative word reclaim it and use it endearingly or as a sign of solidarity, it’s often defended as language re-appropriation. There is much debate over whether the original sexist, malicious intent of the word can be undone by this in-group usage. Sometimes re-appropriated words backfire and perpetuate the stereotypes the speaker wishes to debunk. Sometimes the words are used for shock value.

* Why did this student choose that word?

* What other words could she have used?

* How can she be gently stopped?

During group work, you hear a boy say to a girl, ‘Stop PMS-ing and just take notes, OK?’

Menstruation and its related side-effects (imagined or otherwise) are used to marginalise women and exclude them from particular job functions or decision-making roles. PMS references are sexist barbs used to portray women and girls as over-sensitive, emotional, inconsistent, irrational and angry.

* What was this student trying to convey to his female classmate?

* Is there another way to say it?

You put students into groups and overhear one turn to another and say, ‘Good, you can be our token black.’

‘Token black’ indeed tokenises the black student by characterising him and all his contributions as ‘token’ and not integral to the completion of the project. This student’s contributions are marginalised before the assignment even begins. ‘Ironic’ racism calls attention to race in what the speaker intends as witty, modern and post-racial ways but really just reinforces stereotypes and dehumanises people of colour. If the ‘humour’ in the joke is based on someone’s group membership, it’s a racist joke, even if it’s meant to be ironic.

* What did this student mean to imply with his statement?

* How might the student being singled out as a token feel?

A boy who likes attention gets laughs by chanting to a classmate with hearing aids, ‘Can you hear me now?’

Making fun of someone for a physical disability isn’t funny. What effect did this student’s humour have on the classroom environment?

* How might the targeted student felt when this comment was made?

A teacher criticises a girl about her earring, ‘Don’t you realise that those look bogan?’

‘Bogan’ is a term that has specific stereotypical connotations (urban, poor with a lack of manners and education) and shouldn’t be used in the school environment.

* Does the context and significance of the comment change if this teacher is from a background similar to the student?

* Does the significance change if a student makes the comment?

Adapted from Speak up at school: A publication of teaching tolerance 2012 available for download at http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/toolkit-new-resources-teaching-tolerance

Resource 16 – short story openings

It was really cold this morning so I got my coat out for the first time since last year. I love the moment when you put your hand in pocket and you find money and you'd forgotten you had it. So when Nick said he wanted to go and get kebabs I said, 'Yeah, let's,’ because I had some money and I could.

‘You are not the only person who has ever had to move school.’ Thomas’s mother scooped a pile of plates from the table and stood up. ‘I moved six times when I was a kid. I’m sick of this, Thomas. We’ve had this out all holidays. You know why we moved. We couldn’t have stayed. My job here is much better. Your father at least stands a chance of getting something’. She stacked the plates on the sink and came back into the dining room. ‘Wash those up before you go to school. And do your hair. I’ve got to rush.’ She picked up her bag and leant across the table. ‘C’mon, love. It’ll get better. You will make friends, you know. You’re not a social incompetent.’

Edwin John Eastwood said he was watching Clint Eastwood’s terrifying crime movie Dirty Harry when he had an idea for an equally terrifying crime.

Larry stopped a few metres from the bus stop and tapped the bulge in his hip pocket. As he watched the kids jostling into the bus he actually felt nervous. Which was ridiculous.

I thought the day my dog died was the worst day of my life. But I was wrong. The day I brought him home from the taxidermist was far worse.

I really should thank my brother, Steve, for where I am today. Of course he would never have helped me on purpose. It’s not that we don’t get on, but there is a healthy sibling rivalry there. You see, we are both in the same business; we are inventors.

They lay in the midnight drizzle, flat on their stomachs in the mud, watching the house of a rifle-wielding crazy man. They waited for the sergeant’s order to move, to cross the street and take him.

‘This was going to be bad,’ Dan thought as he walked through his front gate. He could always talk mum into accepting his school results; she was a real softie. But his Dad was a different proposition.

Thelma was not your typical grandma. Not only did she boldly expose her midriff and wear great jangling earrings but she refused to wear demure colours, preferring bold flashes of iridescent orange and flamingo pink.

Analysing introductions to short stories

Answer the following questions using direct quotes to support your answer.

1. Is it first or third person narrative?

1. Is it past or present tense?

1. Is it descriptive or factual language?

1. Is it formal or informal language?

Here are ways authors try to hook the reader an interesting:

* character description
* setting description
* object description
* dialogue
* mysterious unusual situation
* a short, snappy sentence

1. What type of hook does this introductory paragraph use?

1. How is it made effective? (What makes you want to find out what happens?)

(Opening paragraphs are from ‘[Story Wizards](http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/8383936?q&versionId=9668996)’ ed. S. Bernhardt, Macmillan Education Australia (2005).

Resource 17 – characterisation

A characterisation device used in this novel is to assign spirit totems to each samurai kid and describe them accordingly.

Totem Chart

A totem is

| Kid | Totem | Why this totem suits this character |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Niye | White crane |  |
| Yoshi |  |  |
| Taji |  |  |
| Kyoko |  |  |
| Mikko |  |  |
| Nezume |  |  |

Characterisation

Other suggested activities.

Responding – read Niya’s description of his own totem. How and why do you think Niya identifies with the crane physically and spiritually? Depict what you think Niya looks like based on the novel’s description, trying to incorporate the essence of the spirit totem in your illustration (see pp. 14, 15 and 22).

Responding – analysis of ‘Samurai kids: white crane’ characterisation – how Fussell reveals character by showing rather than telling (Using ‘Dragon Master’ – chapter 5 pp. 70–74 as an exemplar)

Read pages 70–74. Create a list of personality traits described but not named in this passage. Examples students might offer include: Frightening – ‘tall, dark man…red silk…embroidered with gold…black hair…narrow scar…weasel face’ Full of self-importance – ‘but when he sees it is us, he looks over our heads and then away’

Composing – students create their own piece of writing by describing someone from their household using the same techniques as Fussell. Instruct them to start by first making a list of personality traits then connecting this to physical traits and physical actions. Next they should give their character a task to achieve.

Responding – possible group work – create a character profile for one of the Samurai kids: white crane or Ki-Yaga. Note the character’s appearance, strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes and personality traits. Students should provide evidence from the text (quotes) for each piece of information as well as an explanation of its significance. How this is created/presented should be determined by classroom context.

Composing – students choose an animal spirit totem for themselves (lower ability – use those in the novel; extension, research animal totems online) and write a descriptive paragraph of themselves doing something (e.g. meeting someone, playing sport, in the classroom) that shows aspects of that spirit totem.

Resource 18 – dialogue writing workshop

Teacher-directed lesson

Using chapter 7 – p. 112 (Riaze and Niya’s conversation)

Read the conversation. What makes this effective dialogue?

Discuss and/or make notes on the following points on how to write good dialogue:

* a conversation between two or more people
* essential to fiction writing
* brings characters to life and adds interest
* must do more than just duplicate real speech
* consists of the most exciting, most interesting, most emotional and most dramatic words.

Composing dialogue

Divide students into pairs.

* Show them a picture of Niya speaking with Ki-Yaga. (p. 135)
* Instruct pairs to invent a situation and speak then write a dialogue of at least 10 lines.
* Encourage students to include explanatory material and to write more than just ‘he said ... she said.’
* As students create their dialogue, write the following functions for dialogue on the board, one colour per function:
  + provide information
  + describe a place or character
  + create a sense of time or place
  + create suspense or conflict
  + move the story forward
  + reveal a character's thoughts
  + summarise what has happened.
* Annotate their dialogue by colour coding so as to identify the function of their own dialogue. If it is not functional, rewrite to become more purposeful.

Editing dialogue

Revise correct punctuation of dialogue (see Resource 7) – give handout or model on the board as appropriate.

* Remind them to use the list on the board to help them find passages where they could enhance their dialogue.
* Explain that the use of a dialogue tag is not always necessary. Readers often know who is speaking without having to be told.
* For writing passages with several lines of dialogue, instruct students to cover up their dialogue one line at a time. Read the dialogue without the covered line. If it makes sense then either change or delete the covered line.
* Ask several students to read their dialogue to the class.
* Ask several students to read their dialogue before and after removing dialogue tags.

Wrap up

* Students record one piece of information they have learned about writing dialogue during this lesson that they would like to use when writing their short story.

This lesson has been adapted from: Lorcher, T (updated: 4/29/2010) ‘Writing effective dialogue’. Bright Hub Education: <http://www.brighthubeducation.com/high-school-english-lessons/12897-writing-dialogue-effectively>

Resource 19 – Story writing organiser

Setting (time and place)

Time

Place

Characters

Problems

Plot/events

Resolution

Resource 20 – paragraphing

Paragraphs for narratives

In narratives, the way paragraphs look on the page is important. They encourage a reader to read your story.

Good stories have a rhythm – sometimes fast, sometimes slow. Paragraphs show the beat of your story.

In a narrative, paragraphs can be as short as a single word or sentence.

In a story, you should start a new paragraph when:

* A new character enters
* A new event happens
* A new setting is described
* A new person is speaking
* Time moves on… a lot
* A single idea or thought needs to have an impact.

[www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/early\_middle/3579\_poster\_paragraphs04\_narratives.pdf](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/early_middle/3579_poster_paragraphs04_narratives.pdf)

Other recommended resources

Students

* Evaluation station for Year 7 for story writing: http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/6\_8/evalstation/7/story/intro.html
* Picture of you: Anh Do DVD Enhance TV (broadcast 27/3/2012 – Channel 7). Alternatively, Anh Do speaks with Adam Hills (available on YouTube)
* Wordle: http://www.wordle.net/ (Wordle is a toy for generating ‘word clouds’ from text that you provide.)
* YouTube: Ototake Hirotada playing baseball <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m3YkswjAho>

Teachers:

* An introduction to the grammar of visual design (2002) Quality Teacher Program: http://www.qtp.nsw.edu.au/qtp/files/elise/project3/grammar.pdf
* Education place: kids' place, Houghton Mifflin English: http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/6\_8/ (Many essay writing and narrative writing resources suitable for Years 6–8 students, including self-evaluation tools.)
* Hutt, J & Hosking, B Playback theatre: a creative resource for reconciliation, Brandeis International Fellows www.brandeis.edu/ethics/.../pdfs/.../Bev\_Jenny\_final\_ALDEdit.pdf
* Kimmel, EA & Gerstein, M (2003) Three samurai cats, Holiday House (An adaptation of a Japanese folktale in which a feudal lord seeks a samurai cat to rid his castle of a savage rat, but soon discovers that violence is not always the best way to accomplish things.)
* Lansky, B How to write a haiku: http://www.poetryteachers.com/poetclass/lessons/haiku.html
* Learner, Annenberg (accessed 12/10/12) ‘Fishbowl’ teaching strategy: http://www.learner.org/workshops/tml/workshop3/teaching2.html
* Lorcher, T (updated: 4/29/2010) Writing effective dialogue Bright Hub Education: http://www.brighthubeducation.com/high-school-english-lessons/12897-writing-dialogue-effectively
* Playback theatre www.playbacktheatre.org/wp.../Salas\_PT-Addresses-Bullying.pdf (A very good introduction from Educational Leadership about how and why Playback theatre works.)
* Ramp up: http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/ (ABC's online destination for news, discussion, debate and humour for everyone in Australia's disability communities.)
* Teaching tolerance: What is ableism?: http://www.tolerance.org/activity/lesson-1-what-ableism