UNIT 1

ENGLISH — CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

The BIG question
How does the English language and its history reveal who we are and what we value?

Key learning ideas
● The English language has evolved to reflect different contexts, perspectives and values.
● Language choices position audiences and make meaning.
● Language is an expression of individual and group identity.

Key knowledge, understanding and skills
Students will:
● explore the way language develops and changes to suit cultural contexts
● analyse and respond to a range of literary and non-literary texts in different forms of English
● evaluate the relationships among language, cultural context and identity.
A runaway success ...

What do all the texts shown below have in common? That’s right — they are all forms of English.

English is a ‘lingua franca’; that is, it is a common language used by speakers of different languages. It is internationally recognised, particularly in the business, medical and technological worlds. It is understood by over two billion people.

According to writer Jeremy Butterfield, if all the words in the English corpus were placed side by side, the line would stretch from the northern tip of Scotland to the southern tip of New Zealand.

There really is no single English language; rather, English has taken many forms over the centuries, and is continuing to evolve to reflect changing social and cultural contexts.

I said, ‘Dyou mean to tel me them before us by the time they done 1997 years they had boats in the air and all them things and here we are weve done 2347 years and mor and stil slogging in the mud?’

He put his han on my shoulder he said, ‘Now youre talking jus like me I dont know how many times Ive said that. Now you see the wool thing what Im getting at its why Im all ways strest and straint Im just a woar out man.’

— From Riddley Walker by Russell Hoban

Ted shook his head. Three more sheilas. There’s three boys too. One’s a slowbo, dja see? Is not, said Rose.

Betcha.

‘If yer yer father’s son yull bet on anythin.’

— From Cloudstreet by Tim Winton

My view ...

The texts above all demonstrate how English has taken on different forms to reflect changing values, contexts and perspectives. Choose one of the texts and write a paragraph reflecting on the values and perspectives revealed by the text.
THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

What’s so special about English?

The English language is a lot like a hamburger: it has layers of filling piled up to make something rich and tasty. The hamburger gives us a snapshot of the various languages that contributed to what we know as English.

The English language really began when Britain was invaded by three Germanic tribes in the fifth century AD: the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. Before their arrival, Britain was home to the Celts, who spoke a variety of Celtic languages. The invading tribes pushed much of the Celtic population into what are now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Only a few words spoken by the original Celts have survived in modern English; for example, *crag* and *tor* (both kinds of rocky outcrop), although more placenames, such as *London*, have survived.

Almost half of the most commonly used words in modern language have their origins in Old English, or Anglo-Saxon.

LANGUAGE link

An evolving global language

We could argue that English is a global language. In fact, ‘Globish’ is the name given to a simplified, global form of English that many believe will become the new international language. The term *Globish* was first used by Jean-Paul Nerrière in 1995 to refer to a simplified form of English, based on a vocabulary of just 1500 words.

Another form of Globish was created by Madhukar Gogate in 1998. In this version, English words are written phonetically — that is, in the way they are pronounced. The Globish phrase ‘*maay haart lips ap wen aay bihold e renbo in dha skaay*’ translates as ‘My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky.’

What do you think would be the benefits of having a new global language like Globish?

Old English: *The Seafarer*

The best way to learn about the origins of the English language is to take a look at some of the earliest texts written in Old English. Like any text, these give us an insight into what people valued and believed in, and what life was like for them.

The lines on the next page are from the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Seafarer*. This 124-line poem is part of a collection of Old English manuscripts known as the *Exeter Book*. Text A is written in Old English (Anglo-Saxon). Text B is a modern translation of the opening lines of the original. The seafarer, or sailor, lives his life on the sea, drifting without purpose or comfort. His lord or captain is dead, and he feels that life has no real point.
Text A: from *The Seafarer* (Old English)
Mæg ic be me sylfum soðgied wrecan,
sipas secgan, hu ic geswincdagum
earfoðwile oft þrowade,
bitre breostceare gebiden hæbbe,

Text B: from *The Seafarer* (modern English translation)
About myself I can utter a truth-song,
tell journeys — how I in toil-days
torment-time often endured,
abode and still do bitter breast-care,
sought in my ship many a care-hall,
horrible waves’ rolling, where narrow night-watch
often has kept me at the ship’s stern
when it dashes by cliffs. Pinched by the cold
were my feet, bound by frost’s
frozen fetters, where those cares sighed
hot about heart; hunger within tore
the mind of the sea-weary one. That man knows not,
to whom on earth fairest falls,
care-wretched, ice-cold sea
dwelt on in winter along the exile-tracks,
bereaved both of friend and of kin,
behung with rime-crystals.
Activities ...

IDENTIFYING features of Old English poetry

Getting started
1 Try pronouncing the Old English words in Text A. The annotations will guide you in pronouncing the unusual-looking letters.
2 Which words look familiar to you?
3 What do you notice about the format of Text A?

Working through
4 Alliteration is a feature of Old English poetry. Can you detect any alliteration in Text A?
5 Which of the following words best describes the seafarer’s state of mind?
   ● cheerful
   ● depressed
   ● optimistic
   ● ashamed

6 Kennings and riddles are another feature of Old English poetry. Some well-known Anglo-Saxon kennings include wave-floater (woegflota), meaning ‘ship’, bone-house (banhus) meaning ‘the body’, and sky-candle (heofon-candel), meaning ‘the sun’.
   a Of the following Anglo-Saxon kennings, circle the ones that mean ‘sea’:
      ● seolbaep (seal-bath)
      ● beadoleoma (battle-light)
      ● fiscesethel (fish-home)
      ● hronrad (whale-road).
   b Create five kennings of your own. See if your classmate can guess the meaning of your kennings.
   c Can you think of some modern kennings? For example, couch potato is used to refer to someone who likes to laze about and watch TV.
   d The following kennings are featured in Text B. For each one, write the literal meaning:
      ● care-hall
      ● exile tracks.

Going further
7 Using the diagram at right as a guide, see if you can match the following Anglo-Saxon or Old English words for parts of the human body. If you say the words aloud, you may notice that they sound similar to their modern English equivalents.

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<th>bellig</th>
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**ANALYSING and RESPONDING to an Old English poem**

**Getting started**

8 Read the modern translation of *The Seafarer*.

a How would you describe the subject matter of this poem?

b How would you describe the **tone** of this poem? For example, is it cheerful, angry or optimistic?

c How would you describe the **mood** of this poem? For example, is it sad, fearful or uplifting?

**Working through**

9 In Text B, what images has the **scop** (the Anglo-Saxon term for ‘poet’) used to create the mood of the poem?

10 Text B is an **elegy**. Which lines in Text B best capture the seafarer’s sorrow?

11 What kind of life do you think the seafarer has led so far? Quote from the poem to support your response.

12 Even though the original poem is in an almost unrecognisable form of English, what similarities are there between Anglo-Saxons and people of today?

13 Anglo-Saxons were also very fond of riddles. Along with poetry, these provided entertainment at feasts.

What is the answer to the following riddle?

When I am alive I do not speak.
Anyone who wants to takes me captive and cuts off my head.
They bite my bare body
I do no harm to anyone unless they cut me first.
Then I soon make them cry.

a What is the answer to the riddle?

b Can you think of any other possible answers?

c Have a go at creating a five- to ten-line riddle of your own.
See if your classmates can guess the answer.

(The answer to the riddle can be found upside down at the bottom of the page.)

**Going further**

14 Imagine you are the seafarer. Life has been getting you down lately, so you decide to send an email to a magazine columnist, Helpful Hrothgar of the *Whale-Road Review*. In your email, tell Helpful Hrothgar (using modern English) of your troubles and ask him for advice. Include two to three kennings; you can either borrow the ones used in the poem or create your own. Also use some alliteration to emphasise the strength of your feelings. Swap emails with a classmate. Then try responding to each other’s emails in the voice of Helpful Hrothgar.

15 What features of *The Seafarer* contribute to its elegiac quality? Consider:

- subject matter
- rhyme
- rhythm
- line-length
- language features
- mood or tone.

(Answer to the riddle: an onion)

**NEED TO KNOW**

**tone** the way in which something is said, which conveys emotion or attitude. For example, a person can speak with a rude, angry or sarcastic tone of voice. It is also the way a writer addresses the reader, or the way a narrator speaks/writes.

**mood** the general atmosphere created by the words of a text. For example, the overall mood of a text may be of sadness or fear.

**elegy** a poem that expresses sorrow for someone who has died, or for something that has ceased to exist.
Old English: *Beowulf*

*Beowulf* is probably the oldest and most famous text composed in Old English. It dates from the early eleventh century. The only surviving copy of *Beowulf* was nearly destroyed by fire in 1731; these days, it is stored in the British Library in London.

Consisting of 3182 verses, *Beowulf* is an **epic poem**. In other words, it is very long and tells the story of a legendary young hero, Beowulf, who is given a task requiring almost superhuman power and courage. Beowulf comes from a tribe called the Geats. He is called upon by Danish King, Hrothgar, to help rid the kingdom of the monster Grendel, which has been terrorising the Danes. Beowulf defeats Grendel inside the Great Hall by ripping his arm from his body. He later destroys Grendel’s mother. The victorious Beowulf becomes king of the Geats and, as an old man, he is killed by a fire-breathing dragon that has been attacking his subjects.

*Beowulf* is a particular type of epic called a ‘folk epic’. This means that the poem would have been recited or sung and passed down orally from one generation to the next. Luckily for us, it was eventually written down on vellum, a type of parchment made from calfskin or lambskin, which is more durable and long-lasting than paper.

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**NEED TO KNOW**

- **epic poem**: a long narrative poem based on the deeds of a hero who undertakes a quest. The quest requires the epic hero to undertake many challenges as a test of strength and character; he must also defeat his enemies or adversaries. The epic hero represents the moral values of his society, such as courage, loyalty, determination, humility and a willingness to serve others.

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Read the extract on the next page from a modern translation of *Beowulf* in which Beowulf fatally wounds Grendel.
from *Beowulf*

He spied in hall the hero-band, kin and clansmen clustered asleep, hardy liegemen. Then laughed his heart; for the monster was minded, ere morn should dawn, savage, to sever the soul of each, life from body, since lusty banquet waited his will!

... Straightway he seized a sleeping warrior for the first, and tore him fiercely asunder, the bone-frame bit, drank blood in streams, swallowed him piecemeal: swiftly thus the lifeless corse was clear devoured, e'en feet and hands. Then farther he hied; for the hardy hero with hand he grasped, felt for the foe with fiendish claw, for the hero reclining, — who clutched it boldly, prompt to answer, propped on his arm. Soon then saw that shepherd-of-evils that never he met in this middle-world, in the ways of earth, another wight with heavier hand-gripe; at heart he feared, sorrowed in soul, — none the sooner escaped! Fain would he flee, his fastness seek, the den of devils: no doings now such as oft he had done in days of old! Then bethought him the hardy Hygelac-thane of his boast at evening: up he bounded, grasped firm his foe, whose fingers cracked. The fiend made off, but the earl close followed. The monster meant — if he might at all — to fling himself free, and far away fly to the fens, — knew his fingers’ power in the gripe of the grim one.

... Again uprose din redoubled. Danes of the North with fear and frenzy were filled, each one, who from the wall that wailing heard, God’s foe sounding his grisly song, cry of the conquered, clamorous pain from captive of hell. Too closely held him he who of men in might was strongest in that same day of this our life.
Activities ...

UNDERSTANDING features of epic poetry

Getting started
1 Can you think of other examples of epics? Consider, for instance, films that have been made of famous epic stories or that involve a hero who undertakes a difficult quest or journey.
2 Who are your heroes? Why do you admire them?

Working through
3 What qualities would you expect an epic hero to have?
4 What kind of man do you think Beowulf is?
5 Read the definition of epic poetry on page 7. Which of these features are revealed in the extract from Beowulf?

Going further
6 Imagine you are Beowulf and you have just killed Grendel. The Danes are full of praise for your heroism and strength. Write a short diary entry in which you reflect on what you have achieved and how difficult it was.

IDENTIFYING language features of Beowulf

Getting started
7 Using a print or online dictionary, find the meaning of the following words:
   a kin
   b hardy
   c foe
   d fiend
   e clamorous.

Working through
8 What are some examples of alliteration in this extract?
9 Read the extract aloud. What effect does the alliteration have on your understanding of the story?
10 This extract contains a number of compound words. Identify three compound words in the extract.
11 Grendel is described as a ‘captive of hell’. Find at least two other descriptions of Grendel that represent him as a monster or devil.

INTERPRETING and EVALUATING Beowulf

Working through
12 What human qualities do you think were valued in Anglo-Saxon culture?
13 Which of the following themes or ideas does the scop explore in the extract?
   a Bravery
   b The importance of protecting one’s community
   c Keeping one’s word
   d Resilience and perseverance
   e The nature of evil
14 Why do you think Beowulf is still worth reading today?

Going further
15 Have a go at sketching Grendel. Note the many references to him as a ‘fiend’ or a ‘captive of hell’.
16 Do you think Beowulf would make a good film? Explain your response.

NEED TO KNOW
quest a journey or series of journeys undertaken by an epic hero. Quests involve challenges, obstacles and tests that enable the hero to demonstrate his heroic qualities.
compound word two words joined, with or without a hyphen, to make a single unit of meaning, such as mother-in-law and database
Beowulf on the big screen

Not surprisingly, *Beowulf* has attracted many film directors, who see the Anglo-Saxon warrior as the ideal action hero for modern audiences. Below is a promotional poster for a 2007 film of *Beowulf*.

The actor playing Beowulf is shown from a low angle; he seems to tower over the viewer.

The grey, stormy sky suggests that this is a dark, violent film.

Beowulf is represented as a muscled warrior, in armour.

The film’s title is depicted in a font that vaguely resembles Anglo-Saxon lettering.

Actors’ names appear below the film’s title. Other production details appear in very small print at the bottom of the poster.

Activities ...

**NEED TO KNOW**

**target audience**  the intended audience for the film

**tagline** a short, catchy phrase that appears on flyers and posters to promote a film. The tag-line captures a key aspect of the film’s story or theme.

**UNDERSTANDING the purpose and features of a film poster**

**Getting started**

1. Does the film poster make you want to see this film? Explain.

2. What do you think this film would be rated? (G, general; PG, parental guidance; M, mature audience; MA15+, mature audience aged 15 and over; R, restricted to persons aged over 18.) Explain your choice of rating.

**Working through**

3. Which of the following social groups would most likely form the **target audience** for this film? Justify your response to a partner.

   a. Retirees
   b. Middle-aged women
   c. Environmentalists
   d. Professional women
   e. Teenage boys
   f. Psychiatrists

4. Explain what you think is meant by the **tagline** ‘Face your demons’ that was used with the poster by some distributors? Can you think of an alternative tagline?
Writing that packs a punch

A film review, unlike a poem, play or novel, is a non-literary text type. We would expect to find film reviews in a newspaper, magazine or on a website. The purpose of a film review is to evaluate or make a judgement about the quality of the film. As a film review is usually intended for a mass media publication, it uses a journalistic and ‘punchy’ style of writing. The aim is to engage the reader’s attention and to persuade the reader either to buy a ticket to see the film or not to waste their money.

Read the following extract from a review of the 2007 film Beowulf.

If you are expecting Beowulf to be just another ‘man-slays-monster’ gore fest, then you won’t be disappointed. Robert Zemeckis has applied his cgi wizardry to the dusty Old English epic poem. The result is a cartoonish Viking romp with lots of puffed chests, sword waving and really bad Danish accents.

Ray Winstone has been made over as the waxy-looking, Scandinavian hottie, Beowulf, all pecs and abs and manly gazes across the Fens . . .

Zemeckis’ Grendel is a far cry from the demon, which, in the words of poet and Beowulf translator, Seamus Heaney, ‘comes alive in the reader’s imagination as a kind of dog-breath in the dark’. Film directors know all too well the drip-filter pressure of the reader’s imagination when it comes to adapting literary classics. The pixilated Grendel, played by Crispin Glover, is a slimy, pock-marked caricature of the original. Still, there are plenty of disgustingly gory close-ups, each frame bloodier than the last.

The pneumatic Angelina Jolie plays Grendel’s monstrous mother, whose transformation from bag to babe beggars belief and is sure to upset the Beowulf purists. As she emerges from the murky depths, dripping in liquid gold, she looks more like a pin-up girl for Cadbury’s Old Gold chocolate than the scaly swamp-hag who gives Beowulf the fight of his life.
Activities ...

IDENTIFYING some textual features of a film review

Getting started
1 In what kind of publication would you expect to find this review?
2 Do you read reviews to decide whether or not to see a film? Why?

Working through
3 The table below lists some of the language devices used in the review to achieve a 'punchy' style and to persuade the reader of the film's worth. Find an example of each language device or type of vocabulary from the review of Beowulf. You could create your own examples too in a third column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language device</th>
<th>Example from Beowulf review</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colloquial vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound nouns or adjectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figurative language: simile or metaphor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alliteration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotive vocabulary</td>
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</table>

4 What is the target or intended audience for this film? Which words in the review suggest that this is the target audience?
5 Which of the following is included in the subject matter of the review?
   - Characters/actors
   - Setting (the time and place in which the film is set)
   - Special effects
   - Themes or messages
   - The script or screenplay
   - Film techniques (such as the use of the camera)

INTERPRETING a film review

Working through
6 Why do you think the story of Beowulf would appeal to a modern audience?
7 Sum up the reviewer’s opinion of the film. Include a quotation that reveals the reviewer’s opinion.
8 How would you describe the reviewer's attitude to the original poem, Beowulf?

Going further
9 What do you think the reviewer means by the phrase, ‘the drip-filter pressure of the reader’s imagination’?

LITERACY link
The purpose of a review
Reviews:
- should engage the reader with a catchy title and opening paragraph
- offer an evaluation of a product or experience, such as a film
- use language to persuade and position the reader to accept the reviewer’s opinion of the film.
French influences on English language

The Norman Conquest of England began in 1066, when William of Normandy (an area of France) led a military invasion of England, gained victory in the Battle of Hastings, and was crowned King at Westminster Abbey. By 1088, the Norman French were completely in control of the country. The era known as the Norman period continued until 1154 but French would influence English for much longer.

English became the language of the lower classes, the peasants and slaves. French became the language of the royal court, the legal system, and people of wealth and property. Gradually, however, English began to reassert itself: children were once again educated in English; it was used in the law courts; and more and more authors began writing in English.

The Norman French gave us many words, and it is estimated that 30 per cent of English words come from French.

Activities ...
IDENTIFYING more influences on the English language

Getting started
1 List any French words and phrases you know.

Working through
2 Circle the words below that are adapted from French. You can use a print or online dictionary to check the origins of the words.

lemon reward marriage person river blanket music air

3 Consider the following words derived from French. Find out the meanings of any words unfamiliar to you.

parliament government judge penitentiary testimony evidence felony

a What do these words have in common?

b Why would these particular words have been among the first French words to be adopted by the English?

4 Why is it not surprising that so many English words were replaced with French following the Norman Conquest?

Going further
5 Describe what it would have been like for native English-speakers once William the Conqueror arrived and French became the official language for the next 300 years.

6 Why would English schoolchildren have been educated in French and Latin, rather than in their native language?
Middle English emerges

The version of English that emerged from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries is known as Middle English.

The most famous poet who wrote in Middle English was Geoffrey Chaucer (1340(?)-1400). His work *The Canterbury Tales* consists of a collection of stories told by a motley group of pilgrims on their way from London to Canterbury. Their pilgrimage will take them to the shrine of Thomas à Beckett, a saint and martyr murdered 200 years previously. In order to pass the time, they each tell a story, with the best story-teller winning a free supper at the end of the pilgrimage.

**NEED TO KNOW**

*Middle English* the form of English used from approximately 1100 to 1500. It featured many French loan words, following the Norman Conquest in 1066.

*pilgrim* a person who undertakes a journey to a holy place. The journey is known as a **pilgrimage**.

*exemplum* a dramatic story, usually within a sermon, that illustrates the central idea or theme of the sermon

*pardoner* a church official during the Middle Ages, who would pardon people's sins for money

Image of Chaucer as a pilgrim from *Ellesmere Manuscript*, which is an early publishing of *The Canterbury Tales*

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The Pardoner’s Tale

‘The Pardoner’s Tale’ is a type of text called an *exemplum*; that is, a dramatic story, usually within a sermon, that illustrates the central idea or theme of the sermon. The Pardoner, one of Chaucer’s pilgrims, is a smooth-tongued con-artist who makes money by selling fake holy relics while preaching about the dangers of greed, gluttony and gambling. He tells the tale of three young men — ‘roisterers’ or ‘rioters’ — who try to kill Death. They meet an old man who must wander the Earth until he can find someone who will exchange his youth for the old man’s age.
The version below is a translation from Middle English into more modern English, although it does still contain some non-contemporary words and constructions.

In this modern English translation, the old man directs the three rioters to an oak tree, where they will discover a great treasure.

from The Canterbury Tales
by Geoffrey Chaucer

Extract A

1 ‘Now, sirs,’ said he, ‘if you’re so keen, in brief,
To find out Death, turn up this crooked way,
For in that grove I left him, by my fay,
Under a tree, and there he will abide;
Nor for your boasts will he a moment hide.
See you that oak? Right there you shall him find.
God save you, Who redeemed all humankind,
And mend your ways!’— thus said this ancient man.
And every one of these three roisterers ran
Till he came to that tree; and there they found,
Of florins of fine gold, new-minted, round,
Well-nigh eight bushels full, or so they thought.
No longer, then, after this Death they sought,
But each of them so glad was of that sight,
Because the florins were so fair and bright,
That down they all sat by this precious hoard.
The worst of them was first to speak a word.
‘Brothers,’ said he, ‘take heed to what I say;
My wits are keen, although I mock and play.
This treasure here Fortune to us has given
That mirth and jollity our lives may liven,
And easily as it’s come, so will we spend.
This treasure must be carried home by night
All prudently and slyly, out of sight.
So I propose that cuts among us all
Be drawn, and let’s see where the cut will fall;’
And he that gets the short cut, blithe of heart
Shall run to town at once, and to the mart,
And fetch us bread and wine here, privately.
And two of us shall guard, right cunningly,
This treasure well; and if he does not tarry,
When it is night we’ll all the treasure carry
Where, by agreement, we may think it best.’
Activities …

INTERPRETING and EVALUATING a Middle English text

Getting started
1 Using the internet or the library, do some research into the Black Death.
   a What was it?
   b When and where did it strike?
   c Approximately how many people’s lives did it claim?
   d How do you think Chaucer’s pilgrims would have reacted to ‘The Pardoner’s Tale’, given the reality of the Black Death?
2 Here are the first four lines of Extract A in Middle English:
   Now, sires, quod he, if that yow be so leef
   To fynde deeth, turne up this croked wey,
   For in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,
   Under a tree, and there he wole abyde…

Circle or write in your notebook all the words that are recognisable to you.

Working through
3 When the rioters ask the old man of the whereabouts of Death, why does he point them to an oak tree where they will find treasure?
4 What does the tale reveal about human nature?
5 If you could sum up the moral message of the tale in one sentence, what would it be?
6 Compare the sample of Middle English above with the samples of Old English earlier. What are the main differences between the two types of English, as far as you can tell?

Going further
7 Where might you find a modern-day exemplum that would illustrate a similar theme to that of ‘The Pardoner’s Tale’?

LANGUAGE link
Shakespeare’s English

The sixteenth-century English playwright Shakespeare introduced or invented over 3000 words. Some of these, such as soliture and exsufflicate, did not survive. Others are now part of our everyday vocabulary, such as majestic, summit, excitement and puppy-dog.

The language of Shakespeare’s plays is actually an early form of modern English. Unlike Old English, it is recognisable to us.

The following phrases came to us from Shakespeare. What do they mean?
● I must be cruel to be kind. (Hamlet, Act III, Scene iv)
● Love is blind. (The Merchant of Venice, Act II, Scene vi)
● A tower of strength (Richard III, Act VI, Scene iii)
● Cold comfort (The Taming of the Shrew, Act IV, Scene i)

Explain to a classmate what each of these phrases means.
Wordsmith …

GREEK AND LATIN ROOTS

English features many words of Latin and Greek origin. How did they get there?

Although the Romans occupied Britain for 400 years or so from 43 to 410 CE (before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons), they left behind only about 200 Latin words that would become part of the Old English vocabulary. English borrowed many more Latin words from Christian missionaries like St Augustine, who arrived in England in 597 CE. (And the Romans had borrowed a lot of words from the Greeks, so English acquired Greek vocabulary second-hand.)

Many more Latin and Greek words entered the language during the Norman period, because many French words came from Latin. Then, during Renaissance times, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, there was a great interest in classical learning and writing — in other words, ancient Greek and Rome, so we acquired further Latin and Greek vocabulary. Latin words include solar (sun) and aqua (water).

An example of a Greek prefix is auto, meaning self, as in autobiography.

1 Each word below is of either Greek or Latin origin. Using a print or online dictionary of etymology, find their meanings and origins. The first one has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>benevolent</td>
<td>benevolentem: wellwishing</td>
<td></td>
<td>well meaning; wanting to do good for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chronological</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>osteopath</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prototype</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vacuous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>philologist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tactile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pseudonym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patriarch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 See how many words you can build by combining the root words below with a prefix or a suffix or both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Root word</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anti–</td>
<td>appoint</td>
<td>–ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideo–</td>
<td>aware</td>
<td>–able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un–</td>
<td>criminal</td>
<td>–al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hyper–</td>
<td>manage</td>
<td>–ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dis–</td>
<td>history</td>
<td>–ology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mis–</td>
<td>engage</td>
<td>–ism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il–</td>
<td>social</td>
<td>–ness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre–</td>
<td>logic</td>
<td>–ic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de–</td>
<td>thesis</td>
<td>–ise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 List as many words as you can that use the following prefixes and suffixes:
- re- (again)
- sub- (under)
- mis- (bad)
- ex- (out)
- -al (relating to)
- -ism (quality or state)
- -ology (study of).

4 Each of the phrases below defines a word of Greek or Latin origin. The root or base word is provided. Using a print or online dictionary, find the word that matches each definition.

a. phobos — fear
   - fear of tight, closed spaces
   - fear of open spaces
   - fear of spiders

b. caput — head
   - an item of headwear
   - the person in charge of a ship or a sporting team
   - the city that is home to a country’s head of government

c. scio — know
   - an academic subject in which biology, physics and chemistry are studied
   - an awareness of right and wrong
   - to be aware and awake

d. chronos — time
   - to happen or make happen at the same time
   - a record of past events in order of time
   - someone who records the events of their times

OVER TO YOU ...

Create a graffiti poster for one of the Greek and Latin root words below. Place the root word in the centre of the poster and surround it with all the words that can be made from this root word. (The word graffiti comes from the Italian word graffito (graffiti is the plural), meaning ‘a little scratching’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>anima (life or spirit)</th>
<th>portare (carry)</th>
<th>polis (city)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sophos (wise; wisdom)</td>
<td>solus (alone)</td>
<td>sphaira (sphere)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognoscere (know)</td>
<td>locus (place)</td>
<td>zoion (animal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My view ...

Daniel Defoe, author of Robinson Crusoe (1719), referred to the English language as that ‘Roman-Saxon, Danish, Norman tongue’. Explain what he meant. Since he wrote this, there have been many further influences on English. What could you add to Defoe’s description? What have you learned about the nature of language by sampling the various early forms of English?
How do new technologies alter language?

The Industrial Revolution in Great Britain took place during the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. It was an era of great technological advancement. Steam power, the telegraph, metal machinery and electrical power generation were just some of the innovations that led to a shift from an agricultural society to an industrial society. This period gave us words such as biology, caffeine, watt, chromosome and pasteurise.

Just as the introduction of the printing press to England in 1476 altered the way English was written, recent digital technologies are influencing the way we communicate with each other. The Digital Revolution of today has brought us the microchip, internet, laptop computer, LCD (liquid crystal display), laser printer, mobile and smart phones, and iPad. In turn, these have given English a dramatic makeover as social networking, text messaging and other forms of electronic text have influenced what is written for these new media.

**LANGUAGE link**

Two great inventions

One of the world’s greatest technological inventions was the printing press. Originally invented in 1450 by Johann Gutenberg of Germany, it was introduced to England by William Caxton in 1476. This meant that books could be mass produced. Many books were now printed in English, rather than Latin, the language of the Church.

The other revolutionary and language-changing invention was the microchip. Invented in 1958, the microchip, or integrated circuit, meant that much smaller computers could be built. It heralded the computer age. Without the microchip, we wouldn’t have microwaves, pacemakers, laptop computers, mobile ad smart phones, iPods, plasma televisions or digital cameras. Neither would the following words exist: download, email, blogosphere, offline, iPhone and username.

What other words have emerged from the Digital Revolution?
Weird words

The following texts are from vastly different historical and cultural contexts; however, they each reveal how powerful the effect of technological change can be on language. Placed side by side, they show just how dramatically English has altered over the centuries.

Text A is the opening page of the first English dictionary, the *Table Alphabeticall*, published in 1604 by schoolteacher Robert Cawdrey.

**Text A**

*Table Alphabeticall,* containing and teaching the true writing and understanding of hard, usual English words, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeks, Latine, or French, &c.

With the interpretation thereof by plaine English words, gathered for the benefit and help of all vnskillfull persons.

Whereby they may the more easilie and better understand many hard English words, which they shall here or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or else where, and also be made able to the same apply themselves.

Set forth by R. C. and newly corrected, and much enlarged with many new words now in use.


Legere, & non intelligere, nec legere est.

As good not to read, as not to understand.

LONDON:

Printed by T. S. for E. Mundalter, and are to be sold at his shop at the great North door at Paul’s Church, 16 x 3.

**NEED TO KNOW**

**SMS** short message (or messaging) service

**emoticon** a visual symbol that represents a facial expression or emotion

**portmanteau word** a word made by blending the parts of other words, such as *brunch* (breakfast and lunch). The original French word *portmanteau* is itself such a word, combining *porter* (to carry) and *manteaux* (cape or coat) to create a new word for a kind of suitcase.

**Hebrew:** the language of the ancient Hebrews who lived in what is now called Israel and Palestine

**Elizabethan spelling** also differed from modern spelling. Dictionaries like this one helped to standardise spelling; that is, to establish set rules for spelling.

The phrase ‘as good not to read, as not to understand’ means that reading is the key to understanding.

**sermons:** speeches on religious or moral issues, usually delivered by a priest in a church service.

In seventeenth-century England, religion was a big part of people’s lives.

**scriptures:** passages from the Bible. Before the sixteenth century, the Bible was written in Latin.

Use the *Table Alphabeticall* weblink in your eBookPLUS to learn more about the Table Alphabeticall.
Text B is a poem written in the language of texting or SMS.

**Text B**

*a txt msg poem*
by Tawnee Brown
I wanted u 2B
my BFF, u C
Not just 2DAY
But 4 eva & eva.

‘TBNT,’ u said
as u @@
and LOL.

U saw my :(;
as we sat F2F.
But all u did
was walk away.
No XOXO
Just a ;) 
And a ‘CUL8R’!

So if that’s
how it’s 2B,
u can take a hyk
and pigs might fly
ADBB.

Text C is an extract from the novel *Cybereage* by Simon Higgins. Computer genius Joel Mawson, in prison for computer fraud, has hacked into the Cyberecourt computer system, as ordered by fellow inmate, Haman Callow. Cyberecourt is a cutting-edge court complex that is controlled by artificial intelligence.

**Text C**

from *Cybereage*
by Simon Higgins
His fingers slowly curled into a fist and, with a sigh, he closed his eyes. ‘Easy, easy,’ he muttered to himself.

Mawson waved his hand at the infopanel. ‘That’s what I mean — the erratic behaviour! My best guess is that the master computer tried to fight my Trojan Horse like it was a regular virus. It probably launched a fractal decryption response, which is inappropriate, because any low-grade script bunny could tell you that the firewall around the root directory —’

‘Stop! In plain English, Professor! Like you’d explain it to a little kid.’

Words are abbreviated or shortened by removing letters or by using acronyms or initialisms.

Emoticons are commonly used in text messaging. The word emoticon is a portmanteau word made from the words emotion and icon (picture).

The word hyk is a graphone: a word that is spelt the way it sounds.

Trojan Horse: computer software that appears harmless, but which can steal or destroy data

Virus: software that can harm or destroy computer files and programs.

Fractal decryption response: the use of a mathematical formula to decode a text that has been encrypted or written in code

Script bunny: an insulting term to describe people who use computer scripts or programs to attack computer networks

Firewall: a computer security system that prevents unauthorised access

Root directory: the main or parent directory on a computer.
Activities …

UNDERSTANDING the influence of technology on English

Getting started
1. What makes Text A difficult to understand?
2. Translate Text B, the text message poem, into standard English.
3. What are the most obvious differences between texts A and B?
4. Which of the three texts do you prefer? Why?

Working through
5. By the time the Table Alphabeticall was published in 1604, printing technology had existed in England for 128 years. What difference do you think the printing press made to the English language?
6. Robert Cawdrey was worried that the many new words entering the English language in the sixteenth century would cause people to forget their ‘mother tongue’ or native language. He refers to ‘the true writing and understanding’ of ‘plaine English words’. What do you think he meant by ‘plaine English’?
7. Many critics of text messaging also argue that it will destroy the English language. What might these critics say about the text message poem on page 21?
8. What positive effects might the language of SMS and texting have on our communication with others?
9. Use a dictionary to note the original or literal meanings of the words firewall, virus, hacker and computer.
10. In Text C, what does Haman Callow mean by ‘plain English’?

Going further
11. How does Text C demonstrate that jargon can be used to alienate and exclude people?

RESPONDING to the influence of technology on English

Getting started
12. Write two messages to a friend, each communicating the same information: one in SMS/text language and one in full English prose. Choose from one of the following topics:
- Arranging to meet at the movies the next day
- Asking to borrow your friend’s tennis racquet or baseball mitt
- Inquiring about whether your friend is going to the footy on the weekend
- Your own choice.

Working through
13. Write your own poem using SMS/text language to a special friend, using abbreviations and emoticons.
14. Rewrite what Professor Mawson says in Extract C in the ‘plain English’ that Haman Callow requests. How difficult is this?

Going further
15. ‘Developments such as Twitter and text messaging are reducing the rich variety of the English language to an abbreviated and bastardised lingo.’ Discuss this statement in small groups or conduct a whole-class debate.
Wordsmith …

THE FUTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Many writers and linguists (people who scientifically study language) have given us glimpses of the way English might evolve in the future.

George Orwell’s novel 1984 introduced the concept of Newspeak, an abbreviated form of English he envisaged for the future. The term newspeak now applies to new expressions or to jargon that is particularly confusing. When the novel was written, Newspeak was a neologism, a newly invented word. The suffix –speak is now used to refer to jargon associated with particular social groups or professions; for example, politicalspeak, technospeak or adspeak.

In the novel, Syme is talking to Winston Smith about the latest Newspeak dictionary he is compiling.

‘It’s a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn’t only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms … Take ‘good’, for instance. If you have a word like ‘good’, what need is there for a word like ‘bad’? ‘Ungood’ will do just as well — better, because it’s an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of ‘good’, what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like ‘excellent’ and ‘splendid’ and all the rest of them? ‘Plusgood’ covers the meaning, or ‘doubleplusungood’ if you want something stronger still.

1 What might be the problems with a language like Orwell’s Newspeak?

2 How would the introduction of Newspeak change the way people behave?

3 The following are new forms of the English language. Using the internet, find out what these neologisms mean:
   a Singlish
   b Chinglish
   c Panglish
   d Manglish
   e Indlish.

4 Find out what these recent neologisms mean:
   a brocation
   b infotainment
   c applet
   d e-quaintance
   e man flu
   f lolcat
   g m-commerce.

OVER TO YOU …

Try creating your own futurespeak. Write a brief reflection about your family, a recent holiday, life at school or what you see yourself doing in the future. Create a dictionary for any neologisms you create. Show it to your classmates and see if they can understand what you have written.

My view …

Do you like the fact that English is always changing and evolving? What could be scary about the changing nature of our language? Do you think that the English language of the twenty-second century will be completely unrecognisable to us? Explain your view.
How does our language express our sense of identity?

Our language is our way of expressing our sense of identity and belonging. The words we use reflect the values of our culture. They can also serve to include or exclude others.

As we have seen, words are like maps in that they are imprinted with history. They bear the traces of invasion, war, new discoveries and the interests and values of earlier societies.

Talkin’ Ostrayan

The development of Australian English was influenced by our convict past, gold rushes, bushrangers, Aboriginal languages and World War I. Australian slang or ‘strine helped Australians to establish their own national identity, separate from Britain and Europe. It also gave us a way of explaining the new and unfamiliar.

Strine sometimes reflects Australia’s egalitarian values: ‘she’ll be right, mate’ suggests a relationship based on friendly equality. The phrase is used to show that the speaker belongs to the same group as the listener.

A distinctive Australian voice

Author and journalist Hugh Lunn believes that we are in danger of losing our distinctive Australian vernacular and idiom owing to the influence of American culture. We absorb this culture mainly through television, film and music. Read the following extract from his book *Lost for Words*.

From *Lost for Words* by Hugh Lunn

1. Language tells us who we are: because we are the words we use.
2. If we adopt the language of another society we lose our rights of memory in our own kingdom.
3. The first time I realised Australia had lost its lingo was when I was writing a memoir about growing up in the 1940s and 50s. To capture the era, I had to remember the phrases and words we used back then because most of them had disappeared from view.
4. Readers wrote from all over Australia surprised that their parents had spoken just like mine in Brisbane. And they recalled other phrases that I’d forgotten: *It’s snowing down south; I’d know his hide in a tannery; he’s all mouth and trousers.*
5. Reading their letters, I too experienced the intense joy of remembering.
And so I began collecting every old turn of phrase that came my way, scribbling them down on scraps of paper and tossing them into an old leather school port which someone had thrown out on the footpath for a council rubbish collection. I kept the port in a tiny, fireproof brick room for sixteen years because I treasure this little collection; I could see that succeeding generations of Australians had not inherited what was rightfully theirs: a rogue-ish, rich, direct, expansive, expressive language.

Speaking at an all-boys school, I described to more than 100 how some galoot had... A boy put up his hand to ask: ‘What was that word you used? Galoo?’

‘Will someone tell this galoot what a galoot is?’ I asked.

But no one could.

They’d never heard of the word. But they were very, very interested to know of its existence.

These boys all, of course, knew what a nerd was, what a wimp was, what a wuss was. They could easily converse in the truncated, sarcastic, dismissive form of conversation now common at dinner tables all over Australia: In your dreams, as if, you wish, bring it on, get a life, Puh-lease; Hello! Hello! I was, like, Oh My God!

Absolutely.

Unlike me when I was at school, these boys did not have to learn their poetry and times tables ‘off by heart’. But they were still rote learning: every morning and every evening they were absorbing the culture and idiom of American television programs, computer games, and films. A sort of cargo cult worship, always passively waiting for more to arrive on our airwaves.

How long since you saw someone in a TV sitcom on our screens reach out across the coffee table and say, ‘Excuse pigs without tails’. Or hear a TV character tell someone to drop by: ‘Just toot and come in — you know, the Egyptian Pharaoh.’ Or a woman say: ‘Now she was an education’.

Of course, the English language is always changing. That’s what makes it so evocative and is one of the reasons why it has come to so dominate the globe. But whereas overseas foods have arrived to join, expand and enrich our menu, the tongue of telly has stunted our slang. So that shades of meaning have almost disappeared.

Change isn’t good if it happens in only one direction. That’s called being subsumed.

The influx of American television could have added to our language, making it richer in nuance and colour. But instead it has taken over what we had, and inhibited expression. ‘You’d do a lot with a stick and a bucket of eggs!’ or ‘Don’t just stand around like a spare groom at a wedding!’ has been reduced to: Get real!

As in George Orwell’s 1984, most people are now content to offer a few stock phrases, which have replaced a whole plethora of words and sayings.

Whatever.
Tell someone who cares.
Get over it.
Get a life.
As happened with the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons and, later, the Normans on the shores of Great Britain, the European colonisation of Australia formed a new chapter in the story of the English language. The landing of the First Fleet in Botany Bay in 1788 brought a new language to the ‘great southern land’: the language of the English colonists.

Not surprisingly, many Indigenous words entered the English vocabulary as loan words; for example, billabong meaning ‘waterhole’.

In the 1850s, the words Gubbamen or Gubba Man would inspire panic among Aboriginal people in north-west New South Wales. The words were, in fact, a different pronunciation of government. The word generated fear among Aboriginal people because they associated government officials with taking Indigenous children away from their families.

Gubba later came to mean any white person.

Using the internet, find out the origin of the word kangaroo.

Pictures frequently speak louder than words. The two visual texts on the next page combine powerful visual imagery with carefully chosen English words for very different purposes.
This photograph was taken on the day in May 2000 when 250,000 people marched across Sydney Harbour Bridge to show their support for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

This is a 1911 advertisement for a brand of business shirt. The man featured in the ad was Mulga Fred, an Aboriginal man from Victoria who became known as Pelaco Bill. As payment for his starring role, he was given free shirts.

‘Mine tink it they fit’ is supposed to imitate the way Indigenous Australians spoke English.

Use the Pelaco Bill weblink in your eBookPLUS to see another advertisement featuring Pelaco Bill.
Activities ...

UNDERSTANDING Aboriginal English and representations of Indigenous Australians

Getting started
1 For many Indigenous Australians, English is a second language. See if you can match the Aboriginal English words below with their Standard Australian English meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal English</th>
<th>Standard Australian English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deadly</td>
<td>police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tidda</td>
<td>fantastic, awesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gubba</td>
<td>joking, pretending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mish</td>
<td>non-Aboriginal person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gunjies</td>
<td>best friend, female friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mob</td>
<td>Aboriginal language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lingo</td>
<td>family, kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gammon</td>
<td>mission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working through
2 What is the significance of the word Sorry written across the Sydney sky in Text A?
3 Why might many Australian governments have resisted saying this particular word to Indigenous Australians?
4 In Text B, the words mine tink it they fit are a version of English. What are they intended to mean?
5 What stereotype about Indigenous Australians is being reinforced in Text B?
6 After viewing these images, what might Indigenous Australians feel about the English language and what it can be used for?

Going further
7 Why do you think that Indigenous Australians have developed their own variations of standard English words?

What’s in a name?
In 1992, the official name of Australia’s famous monolith was changed from Ayers Rock to Uluru, the name used by the Anangu people of central Australia.
Teen-speak

In order to belong to a particular social group, it is important to speak the same language. Teenagers can often use words in ways that are difficult for older people to understand. Like any form of slang, teen language is all about feeling part of a group and having a sense of identity as a group. It’s like a secret code that can be deciphered only by members of a club. Adolescence has often been exemplified by the use of colloquial language, jargon or slang that is exclusive to the younger generation or a subculture within it. The interview extract on the next page with the fictional character Ja’mie uses language and speech patterns that are modelled on contemporary teen speech.
**Activities ...**

**RESPONDING to teenage slang**

**Getting started**

1. What’s your first impression of Ja’mie from reading this extract? What adjectives would you use to describe her?

2. Highlight any words and phrases Ja’mie uses that are familiar to you.

**Working through**

3. Write a definition for each of the following slang expressions. Imagine that you are writing them for people who are unfamiliar with Ja’mie’s teen slang.

   a. random
   b. povo
   c. Everyone was like, ‘Oh my God’
   d. ‘cos everyone’s trying to Add Me

4. In what ways is Ja’mie a stereotypical teenage girl?

5. How does Ja’mie use the word like? Why is this use of the word so common?

**Going further**

6. Continue the interview with Ja’mie. Include at least two more questions and responses. Use appropriate slang and include some of her favourite topics of conversation: herself, boys, her future modelling career, her fundraising and social justice campaigning, and private versus state schools.
Really cool
Texts designed for young people are often highly visual and use language in playful or creative ways.

Activities...
UNDERSTANDING the language of a visual text

Getting started
1. Do you find the poster appealing?
2. What message is the poster promoting or advertising?

Working through
3. Who is the target audience for this text? How do you know?
4. The word cool has many different meanings. As well as referring to the temperature, it can describe something that is fashionable and desirable. What do the words chill and awesome mean as used in the poster?

Going further
5. What aspects of the poster might your grandparents find difficult to understand? Why?
**Wordsmith ...**

**DENOTATION, CONNOTATION AND EUPHEMISM**

When we consider what a word means, we can refer to both its *denotation* and its *connotations*.

A denotation is the literal meaning of a word. Connotations are the meanings implied by the word.

The denotation of the word *fragrance*, for example, is 'smell'. However, the word *fragrance* suggests sweetness and perfume. While the word *odour* also denotes a smell, its connotation can be quite different: a nasty, unpleasant smell.

When you use a word, be aware of its connotations in deciding whether it is the right word to use to suit your purpose and audience.

1 The words in each row of the following table share the same denotation. What are the different connotations of the words in each group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>asylum seekers</th>
<th>illegal immigrants</th>
<th>boat people</th>
<th>queue jumpers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sack</td>
<td>let go</td>
<td>make redundant</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>die</td>
<td>pass away</td>
<td>expire</td>
<td>kick the bucket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentally ill</td>
<td>crazy</td>
<td>mad</td>
<td>loony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A *euphemism* is the use of a mild, inoffensive word or phrase in place of something blunter and more direct. The word *euphemism* comes from the Greek words *eu*, meaning 'good', and *pheme*, meaning 'speaking'. To speak or write euphemistically is to soften the effect of the words in an effort to seem neutral or even to conceal a harsh truth. Language that is 'politically correct' is seen by many people as a type of euphemism; other people see it as politeness.

2 Match the words in the left-hand column below with their euphemism in the right-hand column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>blind</th>
<th>sanitation engineer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>garbage collector</td>
<td>vertically challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short</td>
<td>senior citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old man</td>
<td>visually impaired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OVER TO YOU ...**

Imagine you have the task of creating a real estate post for realestate.com. However, the house you must promote is the 'worst house in the street'. Paint a positive picture with words by using euphemisms (such as 'a renovator's delight') and highlighting the appealing features of the house. Do your research first by looking in the real estate section of your local paper or on the internet.
Write a feature article
You have been asked to contribute an article to a student newspaper in response to one of the topics listed below:

- The influence of teenage slang
- The attitudes towards the Australian accent
- The use of slang by politicians
- The need to teach Shakespeare in secondary schools
- The language used to report major news events
- The value of reading Australian texts
- The influence of computer technology on our use of language
- The generation gap of language
- The importance of speaking ‘proper’ English.

Your audience consists of fellow students and members of the public who are keen to know what young people think about important issues. Use Hugh Lunn’s feature article on pages 24–5 as a guide.

Developing a point of view
It is not enough to decide on a topic for your feature article. A feature article is an opinionative text, so you need to develop a point of view about the topic. This becomes the central idea or focus of your article. For example, if you are given the topic ‘foreign languages’, your point of view might be: ‘Learning a foreign language helps us to learn more about ourselves and our world.’ For this point of view to be convincing and valid, it needs deeper exploration, elaboration and evidence.

Note that each of the topics above raises a question that you would need to consider when developing your point of view. For example, the final topic raised the question: what is ‘proper’ English? Is there such a thing? So when you choose a topic for your feature article, you need to consider the complexities of the topic and how you might address these.

Create a KWS chart to help plan your approach to the topic:

- What do I know?
- What do I want to learn?
- What are possible sources?

Textual features of a feature article
Unlike news reports that focus on what happened, feature articles provide a more in-depth exploration of an important issue or human interest story. Ranging in length from a couple of hundred words to a few thousand, a good feature article is well researched and shows evidence of wide reading. A strong lead or introductory paragraph is required to ‘hook’ the reader. The paragraphs that form the body of the article develop the central idea or topic of the article. They give evidence to support the writer’s viewpoint and use language devices to position the reader to think and feel a certain way about the issue.
Some key points to remember

- Include a byline.
- Have an introduction or lead paragraph to capture the reader’s attention.
- Deal with an interesting and relevant topic or subject matter.
- Develop a central idea or point of view.
- Include quotations from experts and people interested in the topic.
- Use language that is descriptive, ‘punchy’ and engaging to the reader.
- Use column format.

Create a promotional poster for a film

Create a promotional poster for a film adaptation of ‘The Pardoner’s Tale’. Use the example on page 10 to guide you.

Your audience, purpose and context

The purpose of your poster is to encourage people to want to see the film. The poster should be suitable for display in cinema foyers, on billboards or in magazines.

You will need to give some thought to how you might represent the main characters of ‘The Pardoner’s Tale’. Will you represent them as medieval English roisterers, or will you dress them in modern clothing? You will also need to determine your target audience, as this will influence the visual design of your poster. Is the film intended for a young or mature viewing audience? Is the target audience predominantly male or female, or of both sexes?

Textual features of a film flyer

Your flyer should consist of the following:
- a visual image from the film that depicts a character or conveys the theme of the film. You may find a suitable image on the internet, or you can create your own.
- a tagline — a slogan or sentence that captures the plot or theme of the film
- a short synopsis of the film’s story
- the actors in the film.

Self-evaluation...

After you have completed your assessment, reflect on the experience by responding to the following questions:
1. How did you feel about completing this task?
2. What was difficult about the task?
3. What did you enjoy most about the task?
4. What would you do differently next time?
5. What have you learned most from doing the task?