

WRITING WITH FEELING

with PETER CARNAVAS

Education Resources

Grades 3 & up

The following resources have been developed to take your Word Play experience from festival to classroom. Written and compiled by qualified teacher, Ella Peile, UPLIT's Children & Young Adult Coordinator, the suggested classroom exercises and activities below are designed to reflect key learning areas outlined in the ACARA Australian Curriculum.

For more information contact UPLIT.

Ella Peile, Children & YA Coordinator

T +61 7 3255 0254

E info@uplit.com.au

UPLIT.COM.AU

About the Author

Peter Carnavas writes and illustrates books for children. His first book, *Jessica's Box*, was shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Literary Award and the OBCA Crichton Award for Emerging Illustrators. He has since created many books, including *Last Tree in the City*, *The Children Who Loved Books* and *Blue Whale Blues*, winner of the SCBWI Crystal Kite Award. He has recently illustrated Damon Young's series of humorous picture books that celebrate family diversity, including *My Nanna is a Ninja* and *My Brother is a Beast*. His latest book is *The Elephant*, a novel about a girl who tries to cheer up her father by chasing away an elephant that nobody else can see.

The Elephant Synopsis

Olive's father has a sadness so big that she imagines it as a large grey elephant following him around. With the help of her cheery grandfather and her best friend, Arthur, Olive sets out to chase away her father's elephant.

View the trailer at <https://petercarnavas.com/books-3/books-ive-written-and-illustrated-2/the-elephant/>

Preparatory Discussion
Talking about Emotions

Define emotions and list examples. Discuss which emotions are pleasant and which are unpleasant.
Ask students if it's always bad to have unpleasant emotions. Are there any times when it would be good to feel sad? What positives could come from sometimes feeling sad, angry, etc.?
What negatives can come from experiencing one emotion too much or for too long?

Tell students that in *The Elephant*, Olive's dad feels sad a lot of the time. If appropriate for your class, tell them that a persistent feeling of sadness is called depression. This is a mood disorder, meaning it's like when you feel sore or sick, but for your thoughts and feelings instead of your body. When someone has depression, the usual things you might do to cheer them up might not work. They might need to get help from a doctor or other expert. Reassure students that depression and other mood disorders are treatable and people can get better. Refer students to [Youth Beyond Blue](#) for more information.

Vocabulary Building
Word Search

The Elephant Word Search

Elephant
Weary
Enormous
Colourful
Sadness
Beautiful

Grandad
Birthday
Pigeon
Jacaranda
Vinyl
Fix

Typewriter
Special
Tortoise
Concussion
Miserable
Remember

D G T L U F R U O L O C O D R N E
C U J T C E N W J A B Q A F A Z S
Z N Q Y Y L O F J F R D P P F U Q
H P B P B E I I M I N S I C O O N
G E P E P P S X E A L G B M R D K
T S G W W H S I R C E J R D E A U
A I Y R X A U G D O Y O W Y B A S
J O K I K N C E N Z N V R V M D O
M T K T C T N U E E P A N F E N X
H R D E R I O U G I E D B U M A P
C O L R Y D C Q C W T U D G E R V
J T T T R S L A I C E P S D R A T
N G L U F I T U A E B J V L P C X
X B I R T H D A Y W V I N Y L A Y
U I J U E L B A R E S I M B G J E
V L E S X T V X I Y C H G I Z M Y
S A D N E S S F V Q J X C W Y Q G

Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (ACELA1778)

Understand how to use letter-sound relationships and less common letter patterns to spell words (ACELA1485)

Classroom Discussion Subjects in The Elephant

The Elephant and the Tortoise:

- What does the elephant represent?
- What does the tortoise represent?
- What does it tell you that the father's sadness and the grandfather's sadness are different animals?
- Olive gets rid of Grandad's tortoise by cheering him up, but this isn't as easy with her father. Discuss the fact some people cannot be easily cheered up. Sometimes, although you can support your friend or family member and make them feel loved, they may need additional help from a teacher, parent, guidance officer, or doctor to get rid of their sadness.
- What does Freddie represent? How did the author portray this?

Olive's Mother:

- What happened to Olive's mum? How old was Olive?
- Does Olive miss her mum? How do you know?
- Who else is missing her?
- What are the helpful things the characters do when they think about her? (Do activities together that she used to do, care for her special possessions.)
- What are the unhelpful ones? (Lock away reminders of her, stop talking about her.)

Olive's Father:

- How does Olive's father show love and care for his family?
- What makes things difficult for him?
- What does Olive think when she sees photos only of Olive's mother in her dad's bedroom? What changes this later in the book?
- Why do you think it took so long for him to fix the bike?

Olive's Grandfather:

- How does Olive's grandfather support his family?
- What kind of adventures do he and Olive go on?
- What is *Side by Side* about? Why is it such an important song for Olive and her Grandad?

Old Things:

- What do you know of that's 100 years old?
- Do you know any people who are 100 years old? Who is your oldest relative?

- Although it can be considered rude to call people “old”, being old isn’t a bad thing. How are the old people in our lives important and special?

Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways, and speculate on the authors’ reasons (ACELT1594)

Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596)

Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion (ACELA1525)

Classroom Discussion Character and Relationships

Map the relationships in the book using a network map or family tree.
Include Olive, her mother, her father, her grandfather (mother’s father), and Arthur.

Describe the relationships between characters in the book.
E.g. Olive’s mother is Grandad’s daughter.

Discuss the different relationships in the book. How do you know that the characters care for each other?
Refer to things they say and things they do.

Olive lives with her father and her grandfather. She also has other relationships like her friend Arthur and her teacher Ms March.

Though Olive can do a lot on her own, she also needs help and support from others. Describe Olive’s struggles and how her relationships help her to be strong, resilient, and optimistic. Discuss how we can build strong relationships with others, how we can help others, and how to ask for help if we need it.

Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways, and speculate on the authors’ reasons (ACELT1594)

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features (ACELY1680)

Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596)

Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603)

Writing Activity Figurative Language

Identify examples of figurative language in *The Elephant*. Write them down in two columns, those that communicate an image, and those that communicate an idea or feeling. For example:

Images

*Her hair was a delightful mess, an orange nest ...
knotted jungle.
Velvety clouds of jacaranda flowers*

Ideas and Feelings

*Ocean full of secrets
His face was like a pale stone, worn flat by sea and sand.*

A tiny patchwork quilt, the roofs of the houses like coloured squares stitched loosely together.

Rubs out the grey parts of my day and fills them in with colour

Come up with your own similes and metaphors. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- A very old, wrinkled face
- Laughing
- A yummy cake

Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion (ACELA1525)
Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using imagery, sentence variation, metaphor and word choice (ACELT1800)

Class Activity

Representing Abstract Ideas

What are the physical qualities of an elephant? Consider size, weight, and colour.

What does the elephant represent? Why do you think Olive imagines her father's sadness as an elephant, and her grandfather's sadness as a tortoise? Refer to the physical qualities discussed and how they might physically show how sadness feels.

Brainstorm other emotions and other abstract ideas, such as peace, friendship, etc.

Describe the emotion/idea in terms of size, shape, weight, colour, texture, smell, taste, and temperature.

E.g. If happiness had a colour, what would it be? What is the temperature of anger? How heavy is peace?

Select a number of emotions/ideas to represent in one of the following ways:

Visual:

Select your colour(s) – dark, light, warm, cool, contrasting colours or analogous (similar) colours?

Think about line – energetic zig-zags, lazy curves, serious straight lines?

Think about shape – geometric and regular, or free-form and organic?

Consider form – does it have weight and shadow, or is it thin and light?

E.g. You might choose to represent happiness as yellow squiggles bursting from the centre of the page, or as a soft pink wash in a round shape.

Written:

Start by brainstorming metaphors and similes to describe your chosen emotion/idea:

As light/heavy as ...

The colour of ...

As small/big as a ...

As fast/slow as ...

Choose the three most important descriptions of your emotion/idea in terms of size, shape, colour, etc. Now picture a single animal, object, or action that matches these.

E.g. Peter Carnavas may have had lots of descriptions of sadness, but decided the strongest ones were big, heavy, and grey, so he chose an elephant because it matches these descriptions.

Physical:

This activity is best done in groups. Students will need space away from desks etc.

Consider your use of space – spread out or closed in tight?

Is your body shape rounded or angular? Curves, straight lines and points, or corners?

What level is the shape on? Close to the ground, reaching up?

Where is your face looking, out or in? What is your facial expression?

E.g. You might choose to represent hope as an open shape, on a high level, stretched out, and looking forward.

Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors (ACELT1798)

Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways (ACELT1618)

Use materials, techniques and processes to explore visual conventions when making artworks (ACAVAM111)

Present artworks and describe how they have used visual conventions to represent their ideas (ACAVAM112)

Independent Activity

Personal Correspondance

Grandad typed out poems for his daughter (Olive's mum) using an old-fashioned typewriter, which he believes made them more special. Do you agree that doing something by hand makes a letter or gift more special? How else can we show our family and friends that we have taken time and care with our letters, cards, poems, and stories?

What would you like to share with someone special? It could be a message, their favourite song, a picture, etc.

Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining (ACELT1607)

Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways (ACELT1618)