

The Smart Word

An eZine for teachers of English & Curriculum Literacy: News, research, reviews and tips

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Editorial: Help is close at hand

Dear Reader

Welcome to another edition of *The Smart Word*. The end of third term can be a busy time—especially in Queensland where teachers finalise initial submissions that will impact on students' tertiary entrance scores. As a result, this edition has been sent out at the beginning of the Queensland school holidays when teachers will, hopefully, have a bit more time to relax and read the current articles.

This edition contains latest information about the development of a national curriculum. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation circulating at the moment, with the media leading the charge as usual. Just today as I put the finishing touches to this eZine, *The Australian* includes an editorial that seems to suggest that all we should be doing in English is studying Australian literature! You wonder if some of these journalists actually put their brains in gear before committing pen to paper. I would certainly encourage you to get on to the National Curriculum website and sign up for automatic updates—see the address on page 2.

Also in the news are the results of the first series of NAPLAN testing. Starting on page 3 is advice, based on both sound research and extensive experience, on how to help your students become the best possible writers that they can be.

And don't forget our new website: www.englishteacherguru.com. Peruse the blogs and leave comments. Of particular interest might be an article on effective resources for modeling genres to students. Included in the blog is a sample electronic model developed for an analytical writing task. If you find it useful, let us know what you think. Contact us if we can help with any of your professional development needs in English or literacy.

Until next time, happy teaching.
Lindsay Williams, Editor

News

National English Curriculum

The National Curriculum Board is now looking at developing a standard English curriculum for Kindergarten to Year 12— not just the widely publicized common curriculum for the post-compulsory years of schooling.

Professor Peter Freebody of Sydney University has been commissioned to prepare an initial framing paper which will act as a starting point for consultation.

...more on page 2/

Special points of interest:

- What's happening with the National Curriculum?
- More behind the scenes with a blogger
- The Grammar Grouch and adverb anguish
- Getting kids to become good writers
- Reviews of stories from the margins and a book about mountaineering
- Studying the language of persuasion: texts about global warming
- More on Appraisal

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His appointment was apparently made after considering a range of possible academics, but many of the names proposed were regarded as too closely aligned with particular 'factions' or 'camps' within English. Professor Freebody is seen as a compromise appointment.

However, judging by reactions in the media, and by emails doing the rounds, his selection has not been universally endorsed. Indeed, some academics have condemned him as being too focused on literacy and the tone of their responses suggests that they consider English to be largely about the teaching of literature.

A national forum in relation to English is to be conducted by the National Curriculum Board in Melbourne on Friday 17 October.

The National Curriculum Board website can be found at <http://www.ncb.org.au>. Individuals can register to receive email alerts of changes as they occur.

Behind the scenes with a blogger

In the last edition, we explored the concept of Web 2.0 with its focus on social networking and introduced you to the world of blogging. In summary, creating interactive websites has become much easier and cheaper—well within the realm of the ordinary internet user. So, lesson one for teachers was that this has led to the 'death' of the first generation website which was typically most like a brochure.

Lesson two: It's all about Google.

Blogs are really about providing spaces for people with similar interests to locate news easily and share their ideas. So, in theory and within the law, bloggers can write about anything and do so in whatever style suits their personality, their target audience and the subject matter. In practice, things are not so straight forward.

In order to find the desired information amongst literally billions of web pages, internet users rely on search engines. The most dominant of these (at least for the moment) is Google. As any user knows, searches can produce thousands of results. These appear about ten to fifteen at a time on a series of separate web pages. It is well known that internet users rarely go beyond page 2 when looking for information. In order to assist users, Google ranks each website and presents them in order from top to bottom. Consequently, if you want a website to be found, then you really need your site to come as close as possible to the top—within at least the first 15-20 sites. (continued page 3)

The grammar grouch: Adverb anguish

'He proudly walked up on to the podium.'

Presented with this sentence recently, I discovered that a high percentage of teachers were unable to identify the error. Take a moment now. Think about it.

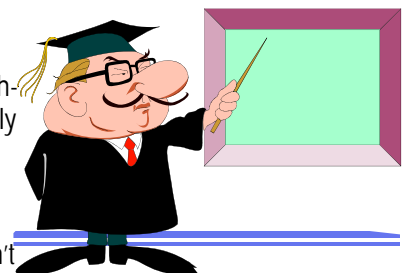
Would you re-write it in one of the following ways?

- ◆ Proudly, he walked up on to the podium.
- ◆ He walked proudly up on to the podium.

The error, of course, is that an adverb should not be placed between a verb and its subject (the bit that answers who or what before the verb). Instead, if one wants to emphasise *how* a particular action occurred, place the adverb at the beginning of the sentence. Otherwise, immediately after the verb is normally fine.

This applies to the infinitive form of the verb (e.g. to go, to seek, to find, to eat) also. Don't say 'To frantically seek'. Instead, say 'To seek frantically'.

'After considering a range of possible academics who could be commissioned to write a framing paper for a new National English Curriculum, many of the names proposed were regarded as too closely aligned with particular factions.'



In order to rank sites, Google uses a complex mathematical algorithm which just about no-one understands. However, what is well understood is that Google sends out programs called 'spiders' to collect information about websites. These spiders search for key words to help them classify sites and judge their relevance—and, therefore, their eventual rank.

While a blogger has no direct control over Google rankings, they can maximize their chances of ranking highly. Most of these techniques involve incorporating appropriate keywords into your site. Basically, this means thinking about what words someone looking for your site are most likely to type into a search engine. To assist you, sites such as Keyword Discovery will provide you with lists of popular keywords in particular categories.

These keywords then need to be integrated as naturally as possible into the first 250 words of text on your blog's homepage. (Practices designed to cheat are easily detected by Google and will be 'punished'.) In addition, blog templates such as those sold by Revolution Theme (discussed in the last edition), contain a couple of other useful features. For example, blogs can have keywords attached to them to assist search engines and they give you the option to 'Ping' Google. That is, when new content is published on your blog, a 'message' is sent out saying 'Hey, come and look at me. There's something new on my website'. Apparently, regular 'Pinging' (i.e. publishing regular content) eventually trains Google's spiders to come and have a look at the site from time to time to discover for itself what's new.

So, what's all this got to do with schools? Teachers in many schools (even those that pride themselves on being tech savvy) still address the ICT component of their subjects by setting assignments which basically require students to write an expository essay and then put it into a website. Unfortunately, this completely misses the point and only superficially addresses the affordances of the internet.

What today's lesson shows is that writing for the internet is different from writing text that is meant to be read in print. There are new rules to be learnt and a whole new set of contextual factors to be considered. For students in schools now, literate practices from the twentieth century might still be important, but they are not in any way sufficient.

Interested in more? Have a look at these websites:

- ♦ www.googleguide.com/google_works.html
- ♦ www.sitepronews.com/archives/2005/june/27.html
- ♦ www.keyworddiscovery.com/

'For students in schools now, literate practices from the twentieth century might still be important, but they are not in any way sufficient.'

**Wordsmart consulting
In-school workshops
2009**

Please note: At this time, all pupil free days in January and the one at the beginning of Term 2 (April) have been booked.

Wordsmart Consulting activities

When	What
On-going	Production of electronic genre models for Wynnum State High School
6, 13, 27 October	Grammar workshops at A. B. Paterson College
8, 15, 22, 29 October	Writing project at Calamvale Community College
20 October	'Building key grammatical knowledge' at Health Sciences Academy, Gold Coast
25 October	<i>Lockie Leonard</i> workshop at ALEA seminar, Moreton Bay College
December 1, 2, 4	Using grammar to improve students' reading and writing at various venues in South East Queensland

Research, Theory and Reports

Helping students become good writers

Introduction

Worried about NAPLAN or QCS Writing Task results? Concerned that your students' assignment writing isn't up to scratch? Can't get the boys enthused about writing? Answers are on their way.

Over the next three editions of *The Smart Word*, this section will explore elements of an effective school writing program. The ideas presented are relevant for both English teachers and, more generally, any teacher whose subject includes a writing component. Some of these ideas are easily implemented by individual teachers with their own classes, others are best implemented on a whole school basis. Finally, some of these ideas can be implemented immediately while others are more long term strategies. All of the ideas, however, will make a difference to your students' attitudes to writing and help them achieve better results on writing tasks.

Encouraging the right attitude

A regular theme of research is the importance of students perceiving themselves as writers. For example, the Pew Internet and American Life project reported recently that teenagers 'write a lot, but they do not think of their emails, instant and text messages as writing'. However, teen bloggers are prolific writers online *and* offline. In a study of three and four year old children in kindergarten, Deborah Wells Rowe concluded that interaction with adults and others helped *recruit* children into the role of 'a writer capable of using marks to represent messages...adult talk and arrangement of space actively hailed children as writers and scaffolded their use of written texts to communicate locally valued kinds of linguistic messages. Further, children were positioned as writers who would use their texts for social purposes such as interpersonal communication'. In other words, the nature of a child's social interaction (even when very young) and the 'messages' they receive from that interaction play an important role in whether or not students perceive themselves as writers.

Therefore, an important element of the success of any writing program is the induction of students into a community of writers. That is, students need to become part of a community that writes, values writing, and values and supports those who write. In short, teachers would do well to exploit the current explosion in social networking. Here are practical suggestions for making this happen. None is a silver bullet by itself, but together they can be a powerful set of strategies.

- ◆ *Timetable for regular, wide reading.* If possible, timetable your students into the library at least once a fortnight—more frequently if your allocated class time allows. Encourage students to read regularly and widely, experimenting with different styles of writing and exposing themselves to new information and ideas. However, don't be fooled—the belief that 'I don't care what they're reading as long as they **are** reading' will not help students in the long term. Wide reading programs need to be structured, planned and purposeful in order to be successful and effective.
- ◆ *Forge links with community members.* Let students know that regular people in the community write for a variety of real purposes every day. Bring in guest speakers to share their stories, or publish short interviews in the school newsletter.
- ◆ *Ensure the teacher is perceived as a fellow writer.* If the teachers expect their students to write and share their writing, then teachers must be prepared to do the same. If students are set a writing task, the teacher should write with them. If students are asked to read their work aloud and receive constructive feedback, teachers must be prepared to do the same.
- ◆ *Expose students to professional writers.* Put aside some money to fund writer visits to the school—week long writers-in-residence programs are ideal. Aside from any nuggets of advice that writers will reveal, meeting professional writers shows students that writers are not godlike geniuses, but rather real flesh and blood people just like themselves.

'Students need to become part of a community that writes, values writing, and values and supports those who write.'

- ◆ *Involve students in competitions.* It's a stereotype, but generally true: boys love competitions. So, get students involved in writing competitions—there are lots around, some with quite lucrative prizes. Also run your own internal competitions—both within and across classes. Depending on the criteria, the 'A' student does not have to be the winner every time. You could award prizes for the most creative, funniest, weirdest, saddest, most-quickly-written story...and so on. This way, students of various ability levels stand a chance of winning and receive support and encouragement.
- ◆ *Publish student writing.* This does not have to be time consuming or costly and could involve: readings on assembly or in the library at lunchtime; work posted on bulletin boards; excerpts sent via SMS; uploading to the school's intranet as readable documents or podcasts; creation of mini-books of student work available for reading during class down time. Schools should also consider the publication of a yearly anthology of the best student writing across all year levels and curriculum areas. While this can be expensive if published professionally, the internet makes this a cheap and viable option.
- ◆ *Be supportive of student writing.* Addressing a group of parents one morning, successful Brisbane writer Nick Earls was glowing about his high school English teacher and acknowledged the part he played in his success. Earls said that his support and encouragement was instrumental in his decision to consider writing as a viable past-time and career. That does not mean that students becoming professional writers should be seen as the ultimate measure of our success as teachers. It is enough that they simply come to see themselves as writers, perhaps ones who are prepared to use this facility to write letters to the editor, participate in discussion groups on the net, compose love letters, write blogs and so on.

Next edition: The writing process revisited and renewed.

References

Wells Rowe, D. (2008) The Social Construction of Intentionality: Two-Year-Olds' and Adults' Participation at a Preschool Writing Center. *Research in the Teaching of English*, Volume 42, Number 4, May.
www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Writing_Report_FINAL3.pdf.

'Addressing a group of parents one morning, successful Brisbane writer Nick Earls was glowing about his high school English and acknowledged the part he played in his success.'

The road less taken: Literary postcards



On a farm outside Matamata, North Island, New Zealand

The set for Bilbo Baggins's home (external shots) in *The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Rings* feature film, directed by Peter Jackson.

Reviews



Better books for teachers and students...

***My Place: 20th anniversary edition* by Nadia Wheatley and illustrated by Donna Rawlins (Walker Books, ISBN 978-192115065-4)**

Who is it for? Mainly for use in primary and middle schools

What is it about? This well-known, award winning picture book is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. The story opens in 1988 (Australia's bicentennial) in a typical, inner city street where people live in rows of terrace houses. Laura, a ten year old, tells the story of her family who have moved from Bourke and their relationship with the local environment. After Laura's story, we move back in time ten years to the same street and hear Mike's story; he is the son of Greek immigrants. As we read further, we are taken back further and further in time until we come to the story of Barangaroo who lived on the same land with his clan in 1788—prior to the arrival of Europeans.

Is it any good? A beautifully illustrated book which opens with a new double page spread, *My Place* has held up very well over twenty years. It is a reminder of the value of literature in sensitive, humane hands. Readers are given a compassionate, but not mawkish, insight into Australia's history—and more importantly, the people who have lived here. The first person text is enhanced by Rawlins's drawings and maps. Even twenty years later, it is not hard to see why *My Place* won Book of the Year for Younger Readers in the Children's Book Council of Australia awards.

How can it be used? This is a book that should be read and talked about by all students. And it is a book that really lends itself to extended study. Besides the obvious links to study of society and the environment, there is lots here for literacy lessons, for example, attention could be drawn to the use of reverse chronological order (and the implications of that), the integration of words, images and spatial organization, as well as the use of third person. In addition, it is a very useful book for exploring the way that writers invite readers to sympathise with particular characters. In a recent workshop with teachers, I juxtaposed this book with a variety of school textbook accounts of the settlement of Australia. In many history textbooks from the 1980s, indigenous Australians remain passive and voiceless. The Barangaroo section of *My Place*, on the other hand, shows how easy it really is to give indigenous Australians a voice and a humanity. Excellent teacher notes prepared by Nadia Wheatley can be found at: <http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/statics/dyn/1218001059961/My-Place-Classroom-Ideas.pdf>

***Ratwhiskers and me* by Lorraine Marwood (Walker Books, ISBN 978-1-921150-39-5)**

Who is it for? Upper Primary, lower Middle school students

What is it about? Like *My Place*, *Ratwhiskers and me* takes readers 'behind the scenes' of Australian history. The main character is a girl whose family has died in a fire, leaving her traumatized. She finds herself on the Victorian goldfields where, for safety reasons, she has disguised herself as a boy. Sun Song, a Chinese market gardener is the only person to show her any kindness and eventually she flees to the Chinese camp, taking the name Lin. But Ellery, a man with links to Lin's past, is determined to take over all rights on the goldfields, setting in place a dangerous sequence of events.

Is it any good? This is a historical verse novel. While the 'verse' is very prosy, it does result in a book that is quick and easy to read—although I found the effect distanced me emotionally from the characters and action. Despite this, the book provides an interest

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'*My Place*, a well-known, award winning picture book, is celebrating its twentieth anniversary.'

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ing, lively and believable insight to life on the gold fields. It does an especially good job of avoiding stereotypical portrayals of the Chinese characters. *Ratwhiskers and me* certainly achieves the author's stated aim of 'unearthing a story from the Chinese perspective'. The author's notes at the end of the book include historical background and a list of useful sources. This is certainly worth buying as a wide reading book for the library and also worth considering as a possible class set.

How can it be used? *Ratwhiskers and me* would be useful as a supplementary text in a study of Australian history (and the gold era in particular). However, it is worth studying in its own right for its portrayal of a marginalized group in Australia's history. In addition, the verse novel style and the use of flashbacks makes it very useful in the study of narrative techniques. Further classroom ideas can be found at: www.walkerbooks.com.au/Teachers/Classroom-Ideas.

***The Goldsmith's daughter* by Tanya Landman (Walker Books, ISBN 987-1-4063-0707-8)**
Who is it for? older students (Years 10, 11, 12) and adults

What is it about? This is the story of Itacate and her life in the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan immediately before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores. Born a girl 'under an ill-favoured sky', priests claim that not only would Itacate's life be worthless, but she would 'also bring ill fortune to all those closest' to her. To make matters worse, her father is devastated by the death of his wife while giving birth to Itacate and her twin brother, and he withdraws from the family, leaving them to be raised by the family's maid. Her father is a goldsmith and spends his days in his studio attached to the house and eventually father and daughter are brought together when it is discovered that she shares—and even surpasses—his skill with crafting golden artefacts. However, goldsmithing is regarded as men's work only and this newfound skill creates a dangerous situation which is only worsened with the arrival of the Spanish in the capital.

Is it any good? Wow. This is the first book for a long while that I have read in almost a single sitting. Aztec society comes alive and the story created by Landman is gripping. According to the author: 'Although this isn't necessarily a historically precise book it evokes how it might have felt to live at that time, in that society, with those beliefs, and experience world-changing events at first hand.' She succeeds admirably. However, teachers need to be aware that this is a gritty story: there is lots of blood shed and, given that the book includes a long section devoted to the arrival of the Spanish, the latter part of the book is quite disturbing. Having said that, Landman is (hardly ever) sensational in her approach and her prose style is absolutely stunning. On the negative side, the reader does have to accept the notion of 'love at first sight', although Landman does a good job of helping the reader suspend disbelief.

'The Goldsmith's daughter tells the gripping story of Itacate and her life in the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan immediately before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadore.'

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Literature News

- ◆ Don't forget that *Brisingr*, the latest instalment in Christopher Paolini's Inheritance series, was released at 2.01pm on 29 September. Other books in the series, *Eragon* and *Eldest*, have proven very popular with many students, especially boys. Check out www.bringr.com.au.
- ◆ Another series about dragons, directed more at a female readership, is the Dragonkeeper series by Carole Wilkinson. The latest instalment is *Dragon Dawn* which goes on sale in October, just in time for the beginning of the fourth term. Visit www.bdb.com.au for more information.
- ◆ Another series for girls, Max Remy Spyforce by Deborah Abela, comes to a close with *Max Remy: superspy*. It was released in August by Random House Australia.
- ◆ The excellent Classical Comics series now includes both *Henry V* and *Macbeth*. See www.classicalcomics.com.
- ◆ *The adventures of Asterix* was released on DVD on September 10. See www.madman.com.au.
- ◆ Allen and Unwin and *Girlfriend* magazine have teamed up to produce a new series of novels for teen girls. See <http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=94&book=9781741752861>.

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How can it be used? Like other books reviewed in this edition, *The goldsmith's daughter* fills in the gaps in history, telling stories that are all too frequently marginalized. Although worth reading for pleasure alone, this is a novel that lends itself to close study (especially in Year 10). And if you want a model for exemplary literary writing, then this is the book for you. For more information, have a look at: www.tanyalandman.com/page10.htm and www.walkerbooks.com.au/Books/The-Goldsmiths-Daughter-9781406307078

***Dead lucky: life after death on Mount Everest* by Lincoln Hall (Random House Australia, ISBN 978-1-74166-736-3)**

Who is it for? Middle and Senior students; great choice for boys and anyone with an interest in mountain climbing or other extreme sports

What is it about? Well, no surprises here— the title says it all. Lincoln Hall, the world-famous Australian mountaineer, recounts his last attempt to climb the world's tallest mountain in 2006. After successfully reaching the summit, Hall is struck by a cerebral oedema. Unable to continue his descent and unable to be roused by anxious Sherpas, Hall is eventually pronounced dead and the Sherpa are instructed to cover his body with rocks. When this proves impossible, the Sherpas leave Hall to the elements. However, Hall is not quite gone, is found the next day by other climbers and, eventually makes it down off the mountain.

Is it any good? Firstly, it must be confessed that the reviewer is a big fan of books about mountaineering. Having said that, this was a gripping book suffused with a Buddhist sensibility. Hall describes preparations for the climb in forensic detail—a section of the book which some may find slow, but which this reviewer found absorbing. The book really takes off (so to speak) when Hall arrives at base camp ready for his climb. From that point on, it's hard to put down. The style is straightforward and certainly not literary, but this doesn't stop it from being incredibly moving, especially in the chapters describing the reactions of family and friends when they are (prematurely) informed of his death. There's also an interesting account of 'vulture' journalism which might provide an added appeal for teachers. Plenty of colour photographs, a map and glossary are likely to add to the books appeal. There's very little for teachers to be concerned about in terms of content. While there are a few swear words in the book, they are used in context. At a little over 400 pages (including the index), some students may struggle with the length.

How can it be used? This book is likely to appeal to a wide range of students and should certainly be included in the library collection. However, it is also worth considering for inclusion in a unit centred around (auto)biographical writing. As stated earlier, the prose is straightforward, but there are also interesting uses of techniques such as flashback. Of particular interest, though, will be the way that Hall handles the unreliability of his memory and brings in different perspectives on his story.

For further information, see:

- ◆ <http://www.lincolnhall.net/>
- ◆ <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/enoughrope/transcripts/s1992665.htm>
- ◆ <http://www.everestnews.com/everest2006/halleveresthall05272006.htm>
- ◆ <http://www.everestnews.com/Summitclimb2005/lincolnhalleverest06152006.htm>
- ◆ <http://www.randomhouse.com.au/Books/Default.aspx?Page=Book&ID=9781741664614>.

Interested in some companion books? Try some of these:

- ◆ *Touching the void* by Joe Simpson (Vintage, ISBN 0-099-77101-2)
- ◆ *Everest: reflections from the top* edited by Christine Gee, Garry Weare and Margaret Gee (Rider, ISBN 184413052-5)
- ◆ *Zen poems* edited by Peter Harris (Everyman's Library Pocket Poetry, ISBN 0-375-40552-6)
- ◆ *The home of the blizzard* by Sir Douglas Mawson (Wakefield Press, ISBN 1-86245-377-

'After Lincoln Hall was struck by a cerebral oedema and is unable to continue his descent of Mount Everest, he is eventually pronounced dead and the Sherpas are instructed to cover his body with rocks and descend the mountain.'

Practical Teaching and Learning Tips

Representation of public issues in the Media Part One

Introduction

Media studies are an important part of English programs—at least for the moment. Following is the broad outline of a possible unit concerned with such matters as:

- ◆ experiencing and expressing thoughts and emotional responses to texts about global warming
- ◆ valuing the aesthetic qualities of texts, including expository and informational
- ◆ recognising and using the patterns and conventions of feature film, film script, documentary, expository website, feature article
- ◆ selecting and sequencing subject matter to organise texts (esp. the selective use of information)
- ◆ identifying, interpreting and applying the roles and relationships between text producers and users, esp. how to establish credibility as an expert.
- ◆ interpreting and using a range of linguistic, visual, audio, spatial and gestural resources
- ◆ analysing and using language resources which express the knowledge, ideas, values and practices that underpin texts
- ◆ expressing and evaluating perspectives in texts or parts of texts, esp. considering gaps and silences, foregrounding and privileging
- ◆ making and evaluating representations of concepts, identities (groups and individuals)
- ◆ inferring from, evaluating and using the ideas, information & images that influence readers
- ◆ experimenting with and evaluating a range of aesthetic features in written, spoken/signed and multimodal texts

(These are adapted from the 2008 *Trial Senior English Syllabus* for Queensland.)

The texts and activities

As a vehicle for exploring these ideas, this unit is designed to explore the representation of public issues in the Media. In particular, texts taking a variety of positions with regards to global warming will be the focus. [While the description below is very broad, teachers should not forget to ensure their units have an orientating, enhancing and synthesizing phase, and that pre-, during and after reading, viewing, listening, speaking and writing activities are included in the unit.]

The initial text for this unit could be the Roland Emmerich eco-adventure, *The day after tomorrow*. Credited with seriously raising the profile of dangers associated with human contributions to climate change, this feature film tells the story of a family who become separated as the world succumbs to rapid and catastrophic climate change, ushering in a new ice age. Students can analyse and discuss the variety of resources (visual, gestural, audio, linguistic and spatial) that Emmerich has at his disposal in order to both entertain audiences and apparently sway public opinion.

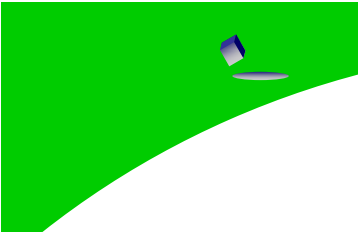
From there, the film can be put alongside other texts in order to reveal gaps and silences, foregrounding and privileging. For example, students can read one person's oppositional response to the film at www.the-editing-room.com/dayaftertomorrow: Rod Hilton satirises the movie and challenges its worldview in his (abridged) rewriting of the script. A more serious approach to critique

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'Roland
Emmerich's
feature film
blockbuster, *The
day after
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human
contributions to
climate change.'

Surprising statistics

According to respected *New Scientist* magazine (13 September 2008), a single bowl of cereal has the same carbon footprint as a seven kilometre trip in a four wheel drive.



can be found at csicop.org/scienceandmedia/blockbuster/ with an article by Matthew Nisbett, 'Evaluating the Impact of *The Day After Tomorrow*: Can a Blockbuster Film Shape the Public's Understanding of a Science Controversy?'. The website is run by the Committee for Skeptical Enquiry which has boasted members such as Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov and James Randi. Consideration of the reliability of websites should of course be a part of a unit such as this.



Next edition: Using documentaries about global warming; some teaching strategies; and assessment ideas

Grammar tips: Appraisal Part 2

Introduction

In the previous edition, the Appraisal system, a fairly new area of grammar, was introduced. In simple terms, this system provides the resources by which we can systematically and methodically study how people go about indicating whether something or someone is 'good' or 'bad'. It is often glossed as 'evaluative vocabulary' in syllabus documents.

'Evaluative vocabulary'

In a more technical sense, the first element of the system is *affect*, i.e. what feelings are expressed by the text. This can be subdivided into three further categories:

- (a) *happiness* (I'm **ecstatic!**); *unhappiness* (e.g. **Not happy**, Jan!)
- (b) *security* (e.g. I've never felt **safer.**); *insecurity* (e.g. I'm really **nervous** about this.)
- (c) *satisfaction* (e.g. I'm **pleased** with your result.); *dissatisfaction* (e.g. I've had better).

The second element is *judgement* which is used to express valuations about people's behaviour. Like affect, it is divided into sub-categories and these can have positive or negative values:

- (a) *Normality* - positive (e.g. He's just **like one of us.**); negative (e.g. What a **freak!**)
- (b) *Capacity* - positive (e.g. You're so **strong**); negative (e.g. Hopeless. Bloody hopeless.)
- (c) *Tenacity* - positive (e.g. He **hung on until the very end.**); negative (e.g. Gee, you **give up easily.**)
- (d) *Resolve* - positive (e.g. I am **determined** to see this completed.); negative (e.g. She was a **procrastinator.**)
- (e) *Truth* - positive (e.g. You're **as honest as the day long.**); negative (e.g. I **wouldn't trust you as far as I could throw you.**)
- (f) *Ethics* - positive (e.g. The **environmentally aware** teenager was rewarded today.); negative (e.g. Sexist pig!).

Next edition: Learn about Appreciation and grading.

Revised publication dates 2008:

- February
- Late March
- May
- August
- September
- October
- Late November

In our next issue:

- More news about English
- Research and theory
- The Grammar grouch back with more complaints
- Another literary postcard
- Reviews of a new graphic novel and a book about the Bali 9
- Teaching texts about global warming continued
- The Appraisal system continued
- And much more...



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