



EPISODE 1: 2008: LAURA

English: teaching strategies

Unit focus: English

Year level: Years 3–6

The Australian curriculum: English

The national English curriculum is based on three interrelated strands:

Language: Knowing about the English language ...

Literature: Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature ...

Literacy: growing a repertoire of English usage ...

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EPISODE CLIP: THE APOLOGY

ACTIVITY 1: LAURA'S APOLOGY

Subthemes: Culture; Indigenous perspective; Politics

Discover

- Before viewing the clip, ask students to think about its title, 'The apology'. Have students 'think, pair, share' what they predict the clip might be about. Invite students to record their ideas on a 'graffiti wall'. Ask students to brainstorm the word 'apology' and list all the ideas and words that come to mind. Discuss the list and have students write a brief description of what they think an apology means to them.
- After viewing the clip, as a class, note down all the significant events that occurred. Ask students to share and discuss.
- Discuss Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's speech to Parliament, apologising for Australian laws and policies that caused Indigenous Australians to be mistreated, and especially for the removal of Indigenous children from their families and the continuing impact on people today. Part of the speech is screened during this clip. You could also look at R10332 'Kevin Rudd's apology speech 2008 - item 1 of 6'.
- Ask students to respond to the following questions:
 - 1 Who is Kevin Rudd apologising to?
 - 2 What is he apologising about?
 - 3 Why is he apologising?

Reflect

- During the speech, ask students to look at how the filmmaker uses Laura to draw attention to the way people are feeling in the room and also to focus on how Laura herself is feeling.
- View the whole episode from the beginning scene where Laura accidentally sinks Michaelis's boat. Ask students to consider what apology Laura needs to make. Who has she offended and what did she do wrong? Ask students to write an apology letter from Laura to Michaelis.

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- Student Activity Sheet E1.1: I'm sorry

Useful resources from The Le@rning Federation

R10332 Kevin Rudd's apology speech 2008 - item 1 of 6

ACTIVITY 2: SORRY

Subthemes: Historical events; Indigenous perspectives

Discover

- Introduce the concept of Stolen Generations to the class and discuss what this means. As a class, discuss why it is important to understand what happened and how it makes sense of Aunty Bev's story.
 - 1 Ask students to write down who they think the key characters are in this clip and why they think so.
 - 2 Share responses and discuss the techniques used by the filmmaker to focus audience attention on two characters: Laura and Aunty Bev.
 - 3 Discuss ways in which the camera is used throughout this clip to draw attention to people and their feelings as the events unfold. Start with the scene in the kitchen when Laura and her family are preparing to go to watch the apology speech.
 - 4 View the clip again and focus on Aunty Bev. Have students note what she does, how they think she is feeling and why. Highlight the moment when she is sitting quietly and Laura's mother asks her if she is all right.
 - 5 Discuss the reason why the filmmaker does this. It could, for instance, be intended to focus audience attention to Aunty Bev, foreshadowing that she will be a character of interest in the story.

Reflect

- Look at how the filmmaker uses Laura to draw attention to the way people are feeling in the room and also to focus on how Laura herself is feeling.
- Ask students to imagine the feelings of the older people in the room during the speech and how Laura might be feeling. Think about why they would be feeling the way they do.
- Two characters are the focus in this clip: Laura and Aunty Bev. Have students write a description of the event from their differing points of view: Laura's as she struggles to understand what is going on and Aunty Bev's as she deals with her feelings on this day. Students may wish to use a 'sunshine wheel' to explain their points.

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- Student Activity Sheet E1.2: Character profiles

ACTIVITY 3: AUNTY BEV'S STORY

Subthemes: Indigenous perspectives; Language and scripting; Politics

Discover

- Aunty Bev tells Laura a little about the story of how she was taken from her mother when she was so young she can no longer remember her. As a class, discuss how Aunty Bev feels about this now and what impact this story might have on Laura. Ask students how they feel about this story.



- Play the clip from R10333 'Kevin Rudd's apology speech, 2008 - item 2 of 6' to the class. Focus on the story of one woman, Nanna Nungala Fejo. Ask students to note any information that they think is important in the story. Have students read the story of Nanna Nungala Fejo in the transcript from this resource.

Reflect

- In small groups, discuss and compare this story to that of Aunty Bev.
- Have students draft a letter to the Prime Minister describing how they feel about this situation and what it means to them.
- You could show students selected clips from the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* for more insight into the way children were taken from their families. Clips from the film with teachers' notes are available from australianscreen, 'Rabbit-Proof Fence (2002)', <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/rabbit-proof-fence>
- Please note that *Rabbit-Proof Fence* is rated PG (parental guidance) and permission should be gained from parents and the school principal before viewing. It is recommended that teachers view all film content before introducing it to students to ensure that it is appropriate for the class.

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- Student Activity Sheet E1.3: Dear Prime Minister

Useful resources from The Le@rning Federation

R10333 Kevin Rudd's apology speech, 2008 - item 2 of 6

ACTIVITY 4: EMOTIVE LANGUAGE

Subthemes: Culture; Language and scripting

Discover

- Replay the scene in the *My Place* clip showing Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivering his speech. Ask students to note any words or phrases he uses that particularly resonate or 'stick in their heads'. Some examples might be 'fellow Australians', 'pain', 'suffering and hurt', 'Stolen Generations', 'indignity', 'degradation' and 'we say sorry'.
- As a class, discuss the impact these words and phrases have on the audience in the clip. Ask students:
 - 1 How do these words make you feel?
 - 2 What was the intention of the Prime Minister when choosing these words?
 - 3 Are these words successful in stressing the intent and meaning of his apology? Why or why not?
- Discuss responses and have students define key words and phrases and the impact these words have on the listener.
- Using a transcript of the speech, ask students to highlight other interesting and emotive words that are used. Refer them to R10332 'Kevin Rudd's apology speech 2008 - item 1 of 6'.
- Look also at the use of repetition of the phrase 'we are sorry'. Discuss why the speech writer uses this phrase in the speech; does this repetition add or detract from the power of the speech? Why or why not?



Reflect

- Drawing on this information, ask students to discuss the elements they think are important in a good speech or public speaking. Using this as a guide, ask students to write a one-minute speech on a topic of their choice and present it to the class.

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- Student Activity Sheet E1.4: Choosing your words

Useful resources from The Le@rning Federation

R10332 Kevin Rudd's apology speech 2008 - item 1 of 6

ACTIVITY 5: THE OLD FELLA

Subthemes: Culture

- The ancient Moreton Bay fig tree provides a quiet place for Laura and her Aunty Bev, who was taken away from her family and is a member of the Stolen Generations. Laura sits close to her as she tells her poignant story.

Discover

- Ask the students to find out more about these magnificent trees. The image of the Moreton Bay fig is a constant feature of the *My Place* episodes. Have students investigate these trees to find out if they originate from Australia, where they got their name and any other interesting information. Ask the students to present their findings as a report to the class.
- Additionally, take the students on a nature walk within the school grounds to explore native trees. List which ones they find with their species name. Collect sample leaves to make a botanical journal of information, samples and drawings.

Reflect

- Have the students write a haiku poem about their chosen tree/s.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E1.5: The ancient fig tree

ACTIVITY 6: TWO APOLOGIES

Subthemes: Indigenous perspectives; Politics; Relationships

Discover

- The story in this episode is about two apologies:
 - 1 Laura's apology to Michaelis for sinking his dinghy and disposing of his dog's ashes
 - 2 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Discuss the nature of an apology and why it is sometimes so hard to say sorry.



- As a class, discuss the differences between the two apologies in this story. Ask students to look at the script for Episode 1: 2008: Laura and find the scene where Laura apologises to Michaelis. She never really articulates what she did but the apology is understood and accepted anyway. Compare this with Prime Minister Rudd's apology speech where he clearly outlines all the actions and events he is apologising for.

Reflect

- Discuss the way in which Laura apologises and how Michaelis receives it. What do students think of this as an apology? Do they think it is good enough? Why or why not?
- Compare the ways in which both apologies are received by the people being apologised to. In Prime Minister Rudd's case these are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, represented in this story by Auntie Bev and Laura's family, and in Laura's case, it is Michaelis.
- Using these discussion points as a guide, ask students to write a letter of apology to a teacher, friend or family member.

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- Student Activity Sheet E1.6: Comparing apologies

Aligned resources

australianscreen, 'Rabbit-Proof Fence (2002)', <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/rabbit-proof-fence>

Useful resources from The Le@rning Federation

R10332 Kevin Rudd's apology speech, 2008 - item 1 of 6

R10333 Kevin Rudd's apology speech, 2008 - item 2 of 6



Character profiles

1 After viewing the clip 'The apology', answer the following questions:

a Who are the key characters in this clip?

b How does the show focus your attention on Laura and her Auntie Bev?

c How is the camera used in this clip to draw attention to people and their feelings as the events unfold? Start with the scene in the kitchen when Laura and her family are preparing to go to watch the apology speech.

d What do you think Auntie Bev is thinking about when she is sitting quietly and Laura's mother asks her if she is all right?

e How do you think the older people in the room are feeling? How is Laura feeling? Why are they feeling this way?

2 The two main characters in this clip are Laura and Auntie Bev. Write a description of the event from Laura's point of view as she struggles to understand what is going on. Then write a description from Auntie Bev's perspective explaining how she is feeling on this day and why.

a From Laura's perspective:

b From Auntie Bev's perspective:



Choosing your words

- 1 After viewing the clip of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivering his apology speech, note any words or phrases he uses that are emotive or descriptive in the table below. Find out what these words or phrases mean. Do you think that they have an impact on the listener?

Words or phrases	Meaning

- a How do these words or phrases make you feel?

- b What was the intention of the Prime Minister when choosing his words?

- c Are these words or phrases successful in stressing the intent and meaning of his apology? Why or why not?

- 2 Look also at the use of repetition of the phrase 'we are sorry'. Why did the Prime Minister use the repetition of these words in the speech? Does this repetition add or detract from the power of the speech? Why or why not?

- 3 Write a one-minute speech on a topic of your choice and present it to the class.



The ancient fig tree

The ancient Moreton Bay fig tree provides a quiet place for Laura and her Aunty Bev, who was taken away from her family and is a member of the Stolen Generations. Laura sits close to her as she tells her poignant story.

- 1 Research the Moreton Bay fig. Where did it get this name? Find other interesting information to present as a report to the class.

- 2 Collect samples, make drawings and find as much information as you can about native trees in your area. Write a haiku poem about your chosen tree or trees.



Comparing apologies

The story in this episode is about two apologies: Laura's apology to Michaelis for the sinking his dinghy and disposing of his dog's ashes, and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- 1 Look at the script for Episode 1: 2008: Laura, and find the scene where Laura apologises to Michaelis. Consider the way she apologises and how Michaelis receives it. What do you think of this as an apology? Do you think it is good enough? Why or why not?

- 2 Compare the ways in which both apologies are received by the people being apologised to. In Prime Minister Rudd's case it is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, represented in this story by Aunty Bev and Laura's family, and in Laura's case, it is Michaelis.

- 3 Write a letter of apology to a teacher, friend or family member, keeping in mind what you have learned from the clip.

