



PENS *Against* **POVERTY**

GUIDE FOR YEAR 3-6 TEACHERS



About Pens Against Poverty

The Pens Against Poverty Schools Writing Competition that encourages schools, teachers and students to become educated in the important issues of poverty and homelessness in our communities in Australia, while nurturing brave young voices through creative writing.

How To Use This Teaching Guide

This Teaching Guide has been developed to support year 3-6 teachers with curriculum resources to empower their students to develop their creative writing skills and create a genuine awareness of poverty and social issues in Australia.

This resource has been developed to accomodate:

- Australian Curriculum
(used in Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia and the ACT)
- NSW Curriculum
- Victorian Curriculum
- IB (PYP) references
- Visible Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

Further information about curriculum links is provided on the following page.

Curriculum Links

Australian Curriculum (ACARA), NSW (NESA) and Victorian (VCAA) Curricula links:

English Years 3-6

Compatible with ACT, WA, Tasmania, and SA curricula

- Language: Expressing and developing ideas (ACELA1484;1498;1512;1525) (NESA EN2-9B; EN3-6B) (VCELA248; 279; 311; 340)
- Literature: Literature and Context (ACELT1594;1602;1608;1613) (NESA EN2-10C; EN3-8D) (VCELT282; 313)
- Literature: Responding to literature (ACELT1596;1603;1609;1615) (NESA EN2-11D; EN3-6B) (VCELT251; 283; 314; 342)
- Literature: Creating literature (ACELT1791;1794;1798;1618) (NESA EN2-2A; EN3-7C) (VCELT264; 265; 297; 298; 328; 356)

Australian Curriculum (ACARA):

HASS Inquiry and Skills Years 3-6

Compatible with ACT, WA, Tasmania, and SA curricula

'The Australian Curriculum for the Humanities and Social Sciences empowers students to shape change by developing a range of skills to enable them to make informed decisions and solve problems.' ACARA HASS Rationale

- **Questioning:** Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI052, ACHASSI073, ACHASSI094, ACHASSI122)
- **Analysing:** Interpret and analyse data and information (ACHASSI 057, ACHASSI 078, ACHASSI100, ACHASSI128)
- **Reflecting:** Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge (ACHASSI060, ACHASSI081, ACHASSI104, ACHASSI132)

IB Primary Years Programme (PYP)

Transdisciplinary theme: Sharing the Planet

Concept: Equality

Enduring Understanding: All human beings deserve to enjoy basic rights in order to live a good life

Central Idea: Children, families and older Australians who live in Australia live in poverty, homelessness and hardship

Lines of inquiry:

- All human beings need to live a good and healthy life and to thrive (HASS)
- Poverty is a real problem in Australia (HASS)
- As authors we can employ effective writing techniques to help us to respond to important issues to express a perspective, emotion, opinion and to persuade others to take action (English)

Pens Against Poverty Integrated English Writing and HASS Unit (Years 3-6)

Introduction

This year's Pens Against Poverty theme is 'Finding a Home'. These lessons are designed to assist students in considering how poverty is a reality in many Australian communities. However, the aim of the lessons is to encourage students to understand the issues but also to hope that change is possible and that together we can envision and enact a better and fairer Australia. The aim of the lessons is to build meaningful understanding of the issues of poverty, and to spark authentic writing that really engages with the reality of homelessness. The writing exercises in these sessions could be used to create and develop writing to become polished writing pieces for the competition, through conferencing and editing sessions with teacher follow-up lessons. Before teaching the lessons, teachers should familiarise themselves with issues of poverty, ready for the tricky questions or confronting issues students may raise.

Structure of the lessons

- Each week, lessons are designed to help students to:
- Build our knowledge and awareness through real-world examples and information;
 - Develop empathy and awareness for the issues through literature, discussion and drama;
 - Respond to what we have learned through creative writing.

Social awareness, attitudes and knowledge

It is important to recognize that for some teachers and students, these themes may be close to their own or their friends'/ relatives' lived experience. The environment for these lessons should feel safe, where students are encouraged to be curious and ask questions, while also demonstrating respect and sensitivity to the issues.

The PYP learner profile is relevant to this unit, in particular the following attributes can be explicitly foregrounded: principled, inquirers, caring, and open-minded.

Creative Writing Books

Students will need a creative writing book each week for a part of the lesson. These 'writings' can be used as drafts to develop for further editing to develop a polished piece for the competition due in early September.

Key resources

- Pens Against Poverty website
pensagainstpoverty.org 'Resources' page
- Anglicare websites for your state. (See: Lesson 1 resources column)
- Australian Curriculum
<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>
- Harvard Thinking Routines
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines#CoreThinkingRoutines>
- Student Creative Writing Journal Ideally, the writing journal is a blank art diary, to encourage students to feel it is a draft book rather than a formal workbook, to encourage journaling, experimentation and taking risks with word choice, and so they can feel free to correct, change and edit. However, any book will do.
- Drama Games <https://www.bbbpress.com/dramagames/>

Unit Learning Intention:

Students will understand that there are many Australians who live in poverty and experience homelessness including children, families and older Australians and will respond meaningfully to the issues through creative writing.

Success Criteria ('surface' to 'deep', or 'knowing about' to 'expressing/ acting on):

- I understand that poverty exists in many Australian communities;
- I can ask questions and make connections about the reasons Australians might find themselves living in poverty and hardship;
- I can identify the aspects that keep all human beings healthy and able to live a good life;
- Through creative writing, I can meaningfully reflect upon, empathise with, and communicate the experience of poverty in Australia and express a vision for a better future.

LESSON ONE: TUNING IN

Introduce.

Explain to students that this unit is in preparation for Anti-Poverty Week in October, and the Pens Against Poverty Writing competition is a part of that. Though creative writing is a part of this unit, students do not have to enter their writing into the competition, unless they would like to.

The creative writing journal will be used for most writing tasks and will be a part of every lesson. It is meant as a journal to develop ideas, and as drafts to be used to create a final polished piece of writing on the theme of poverty.

There are three criteria for the Pens Against Poverty writing competition:

- Demonstrates empathy and humanity through creative writing.
- Creative treatment of the competition theme, 'Finding a Home'.
- Effective control of language to communicate meaning.

Orientate.

Together as a class (or in pairs for older students) or as a lead-up homework activity, ask students to familiarise themselves with the Pens Against Poverty competition and website and in particular, the resources page. It is important that students understand that while other worthy charities such as World Vision are focused on poverty overseas, Anti-Poverty Week and Anglicare (and similar charities), focus their work on taking care of people in Australia who are experiencing poverty and disadvantage.

Many people don't realise the scale of poverty that exists in Australia as it can be more hidden within, and on the outskirts of, affluent suburbs and cities. Ask students if they have heard of Anglicare and other charities that work in their local communities? Ask students to share what they already know about poverty in Australia.

Define.

Create a shared definition of 'poverty' through discussion, inviting students to offer suggestions and keep refining through teacher questioning.

Look at the definition here with the students, but reword in children's words: <http://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/poverty/>

Think.

Ask students these questions to provoke speculation and discussion:

- *What does poverty really look like and feel like?*
- *How many people do you think might be living in poverty in Australia?*
- *How many children do you think might be living in poverty in Australia?*

WEEK ONE WRITING RESPONSE.

Reflect

Ask students to use the KWL thinking routine as a scaffold for their initial thinking about poverty. Students will do this individually, to reflect on their learning this week

1. What I know about poverty
2. What I want to know
3. What I have learned

Students can draw up a KWL chart in their books. See example on next page.

Adjustments

For younger students, or for students who haven't used this routine before, model responses with a shared anchor chart.

Lesson One Resources

1. Creative Writing Journals

2. Websites to share with students:

Pens Against Poverty

pensagainstpoverity.org

Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT

www.anglicare.com.au

Anglicare WA

www.anglicarewa.org.au

Anglicare Vic

www.anglicarevic.org.au

Anglicare Tasmania

www.anglicare-tas.org.au

Anglicare SA

anglicaresa.com.au

St Barts (WA)

stbarts.org.au

Samaritans (Newcastle/Hunter Region of NSW)

www.samaritans.org.au

Ac.care (Mount Gambier Region of SA)

www.accare.org.au

Anti-Poverty Week

antipovertyweek.org.au

3. KWL anchor chart and markers. (pictured right)

Lesson One Success Criteria

- I understand that poverty exists in many Australian communities
- I can ask questions and make connections about the reasons Australians might find themselves living in poverty and hardship

PYP: Activating an 'Inquirer' (learner profile) mindset. Thinking like a social analyst.

Curriculum Links

ACARA: HASS

Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI052, ACHASSI073, ACHASSI094, ACHASSI122)

ACARA: HASS

Interpret and analyse data and information (ACHASSI057, ACHASSI078, ACHASSI100, ACHASSI128)

ACARA: English

Language: Expressing and developing ideas (ACELA1484;1498;1512;1525), (NESA EN2-9B; EN3-6B) (VCELA248; 279; 311; 340)

Name _____ K.W.L Chart Date _____

Topic _____

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Have Learned

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LESSON TWO: FINDING OUT

Listen

Watch the following BTN episode
www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/poverty-campaigner/10527564

For Years 5 and 6, further consider the following:



Visit link below to view full size.
<http://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Screen-Shot-2019-09-08-at-4.21.29-pm.png>

Discuss.

As a 'Think.Pair.Share', where students think on their own about the question, then pair to discuss, and finally, offer responses to the whole class.

1. One thing that was surprising from the BTN story and infographic?
2. What do you think causes poverty? How do you know?
3. If 3 million people in Australia are living in poverty, what other ways could you express this numerically to understand it? (For example, as a percentage, out of 100 etc) Do you think this is a large number?
4. If one in 6 children are living in poverty, do you think it likely that some children within our suburb or city may even be homeless?
5. What sorts of things do you think people can do about homelessness?

As a class create a practical, and achievable action plan that anyone could follow to help relieve homelessness in Australia.

Watch <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/homelessness/10531424> (Go to: 6'35")

Examples such as volunteer work in homeless shelters, donating money to charities, raising awareness with others, writing to a local MP to raise your concerns and ask what is being done in the local area to help.

WEEK TWO WRITING RESPONSE.

Consider.

Ask students to look at the following image and write about it using the Harvard Thinking prompts below.



[CLICK HERE](#) to see larger photo.

See. Think. Wonder

- 'What do you see?'
- 'What does it make you think?' and 'What makes you say that?'
- 'What does it make you wonder?'

For follow-up, older students could then read the full guardian report here.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/oct/16/more-than-three-million-australians-living-in-poverty-across-report-reveals>

OR

Step in/Step out/Step back (for older students)

Choose: Identify a person or agent in the situation you are examining.

Step In: Given what you see and know at this time, what do you think this person might feel, believe, know, or experience?

Step out: What else would you like or need to learn to understand this person's perspective better?

Step back: Given your exploration of this perspective so far, what do you notice about your own perspective and what it takes to take somebody else's?

Lesson Two Resources

1. Creative Writing Journals

2. Video & Web Access

3. Harvard Thinking Resources
www.pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines#CoreThinkingRoutines

Lesson Two Success Criteria

- I understand that poverty exists in many Australian communities
- I can ask questions and make connections about the reasons Australians might find themselves living in poverty and hardship

PYP: Activating an 'Inquirer' (learner profile) mindset. Thinking like a social analyst.

Curriculum Links

ACARA: HASS

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ACARA: English

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LESSON THREE: SORTING OUT

Reflect.

Share responses from our writing task at the end of last week. Use student responses to create a large visible shared anchor chart, if you didn't already last week. Otherwise, read over the chart together.

Sorting out.

Write some statements on card or on the board, and ask students to 'work in pairs to sort out each statement on a continuum line.

Options:

- Older students could work in pairs to do this.
- With younger students could do as a class with large cards on a continuum line laid out across the floor. Give students large paper to plot their thinking on the continuum line
- Could also do this as a 3 corners of the room activity, asking students to quietly consider each statement as you read it out and then walk to a side of the room that indicates 'true', 'untrue' or 'might be true'. Once students move to their corner, ask for volunteers to offer a justification for their response.

True ----- Sometimes true ----- Untrue

Statements:

1. Poverty affects very few people in Australia
2. Poverty means you have no food and no money
3. Poverty only affects people who have no job
4. All homeless people live outside on the streets
5. Homeless people are usually very old
6. Homeless people have always been homeless
7. No homeless people live in my suburb
8. Very few children in Australia are homeless (less than 1 in 100)
9. It is really obvious that someone is homeless
10. Homelessness is something no one can do anything about

Discuss and clarify.

Ask students to share their answers and see if as a class you can come to a consensus on each statement, or give students the opportunity to change their mind once various opinions have been heard.

Using the Anti Poverty website section, 'Fast Facts' together as a class find answers to substantiate or correct your responses.

antipovertyweek.org.au/resources/fast-facts/

WEEK THREE WRITING RESPONSE.

Vocabulary Work.

Students create word banks in their creative writing books to express the emotions and themes that have emerged from the unit so far.

Brainstorm and ask for suggestions.

Encourage students to aim for increasing precision with their vocabulary.

Explore synonyms and antonyms.

Create a wordcline using a particular word, such as 'afraid' to explore shades of meaning. For example, 'happy', 'sad', 'scared'. Invite students to offer more words, 'apprehensive', 'petrified', and phrases, 'frozen with fear'. Look for language in the text.

You could use paint card colour samples to help students visualize the 'shades of meaning'



This word work is groundwork providing tools for creative writing to develop in the next stage.

Lesson Three Resources

[1. Creative Writing Journals](#)

[2. Large white paper](#)

[3. Statement cards \(optional\)](#)

[4. Video/ web link access](#)

Lesson Three Success Criteria

- I can identify the aspects that keep all human beings healthy and able to live a good life;
- Through creative writing, I can meaningfully reflect upon, empathise with, and communicate the experience of poverty in Australia and express a vision for a better future.

Curriculum Links

[ACARA: English](#)

Literature: Literature and Context
(ACELT1594;1602;1608;1613), (NESA EN2-10C;
EN3-8D), (VCELT282; 313)

Literature: Responding to literature
(ACELT1596;1603;1609;1615), (NESA EN2-11D;
EN3-6B), (VCELT251; 283; 314; 342)

LESSON FOUR: GOING FURTHER

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to go beyond knowing about poverty, to begin to imagine and empathise with the reality of poverty. Drama is integrated for this purpose. Don't worry if you haven't tried much drama in your classroom before, these activities are straight-forward and a short video link is provided to show how. Some students can feel self-conscious at first but with encouragement and practise, enjoy expressing themselves and the sense of 'play' and 'experimentation' that drama allows. Drama is an excellent way to build empathy, team work and oral language and vocabulary in younger and older students. This week's lesson culminates in a sustained creative writing session to carry over into subsequent writing lessons to allow students to develop a sustained, polished writing piece grounded in the students' awareness of the issues.

Exploring emotions. Drama warm-up.

If you have not done this before, watch a short example here > [Youtube Link](#)

Students 'pass an emotion' around the group. Encourage students to experiment and enjoy it. Students pass on the emotion from one person to the next in a circle. The emotion is expressed without words, using the face and body. Each person takes on the emotion and then passes it on. Can start with obvious emotions such as happy, and sad, but then encourage more interesting and complex ones, such as apprehensive. Build a word bank of language for emotions as you go.

Read.

Picture book, *The Way Home* by Libby Hathorn and Gregory Rogers. This picture book is suitable for Years 3-6, having more mature themes, some complex text but not too difficult or beyond the

maturity of Stage 2, though these students will need more support to draw out the inferences. If you don't have a copy of the book in your library, you can watch it being read here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjzP18bsSdQ>

Respond.

Together as a class provide responses to the story.

- What do you think the story is about?
- Did anything surprise you?
- When did you suspect the boy is homeless?
- Who is the main character? Is it the boy or the cat? Are they both homeless?
- What emotions did the characters feel throughout the story? Did the boy and the cat feel the same way?

Drama Pairs, knee to knee or in two lines facing partners.

As you read the story again, pause at key points in the text and ask students to show just with their face/body how the characters might be feeling to their partner. One student takes the character of the cat, and the other the character of the boy for contrast. Ask the students to consider the vocabulary they had written down and try to 'dial up' or 'dial down' the strength of each emotion.

Drama. Create a street landscape

Students in small groups spaced around the room, devise ways that they will take on the body posture and movements of a character or object in the environment of the city in the book, *The Way Home*. When the teacher says 'Action', the students bring their character alive. 'Freeze' stop all action. Teacher can unfreeze elements of the scene, where just that one 'character' or element comes to life. Students express reasons for their choices.

WEEK FOUR WRITING RESPONSE.

Descriptive Writing.

Set up some short creative writing tasks for the students, the elements of which could become a short story or poem.

Creative Writing Experiment 1: Building a Scene.

Use text from the picture book to inspire the short burst writing of a scene.

'Past the windows and clean steps. Past a crumbling dark church. Past the sharp smell of food shops. And the cat in the coat sits tight.'

Build suggested phrases with the students, as word and phrase banks. Support students to develop a short scene as a short burst creative writing piece inspired by the drama activity earlier.

Creative Writing Experiment 2: Building a Character.

Focus on some of the lines in the book which build the two characters, the boy Shane and the cat.

Discuss how the author helps us to empathise with the feelings of the cat and the boy. The two characters are developed in contrast. One seems brave while the other is palpably frightened.

- Though the boy seems fearless, is he really?
- How do you know?
- When did you first guess that the boy might be homeless?
- How do you imagine the characters feel at the end when they finally get home? Do they feel safe do you think?
- Both the boy and the cat are homeless. However, do you think the stray cat has found a home now with the boy?

Consider the way the cat is described.

'He talks and talks until growls slide into silence'

'It's very dark down there for the cat in the coat.'

'There's a loud thump and a hard knock and a thud, thud, thud as the boy runs fast. They follow.'

'Such a tight little ball of fierce cat'

The description tell us how the cat feels. It is doesn't say, 'The cat is afraid', but we know more vividly that the cat is afraid and how afraid the cat is by the author's descriptive language.

What is the cat like? Describe the character of the cat, experimenting with phrases taken directly from the text used as a scaffold. What would be some other ways we could innovate on that. Let's experiment with some other ways we could show that the cat is afraid.

Example:

'The cat pulled back on its hind legs, ears flat, eyes wide and startled. Then hissed with impressive force.'

Try some others with suggestions from the class.

Create another together with the students.

The characters of the boy and the cat are quite different. The boy seems brave. The cat is scared.

Creative Writing Experiment 3: Building a Story

Create your own description of being homeless, on the street and trying to get to your own safe place.

As writers we can borrow from authors to help us achieve similar effects. If we were wanting to create empathy with a difficult topic like homelessness, how could we use some of these techniques to do it?

This unit has been designed to help students become engaged in the theme of the competition and as a springboard for students to write their own poems and stories in focused writing lessons, or in their own time. Further time and support will be needed to support this process.

Activity continues on page 14.

LESSON FOUR CONT.

Reflect.

In the words of author-judge, Jackie French,

"First you need to feel something; you need to empathize with people and with the environment around you. Then the words will naturally come."

What have you learned since the beginning of this unit? As a class review the KWL developed in the first lesson.

Action Plan.

Review the action plan created in Lesson 2.

Commit as a class to continue to put the action plan to work.

Lesson Four Resources

[1. Creative Writing Journals](#)

[2. Way Home by Libby Hathorn](#)

[3. Video/ web link access](#)

Lesson Four Success Criteria

- I can identify the aspects that keep all human beings healthy and able to live a good life;
- Through creative writing, I can meaningfully reflect upon, empathise with, and communicate the experience of poverty in Australia and express a vision for a better future.

Curriculum Links

[ACARA: English](#)

Literature: Literature and Context
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Literature: Responding to literature
(ACELT1596;1603;1609;1615), (NESA EN2-11D; EN3-6B), (VCELT251; 283; 314; 342)

TEACHER REFLECTIONS

- How did your students respond to the issues presented throughout the unit?
- How did their engagement with the issues of poverty support their writing, and vice versa?
 - What aspects will require further follow-up?

2022 PENS AGAINST POVERTY PARTNERS



To find out more about Pens Against Poverty, view the teachers guide for Year 7-10 students or to submit your students entries, visit

WWW.PENSAGAINSTPOVERTY.ORG

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