

LIFE ON THE MURRAY RIVER

Level: 5 & 6

Activity: 1

Overview

The Murray River is a rich part of the Australian landscape. It flows for more than 2,500km, through three states. Throughout history, the Murray River has been a source of food, trade and life sustaining biodiversity. During this activity, students will investigate the importance of the Murray River from the perspective of the people, both past and present. They will use poetry to describe these different perspectives.

Resources

- Smartboard or projector
- Appendix A: *Types of Poetry* (if needed)

Activity

ENGAGE

Discuss the importance of the Murray River:

- Who has used the Murray River in the past? For what?
- Who uses the Murray River today? For what?
- How is the river being cared for?
- Do you know of any current issues regarding the Murray River?

EXPLORE

Students will need to set up a page in their workbooks. They need to divide the page into two sections, titled PAST and PRESENT. Explain that while they watch the video, students should note down any interesting language that they hear that describes the importance of the river, including how it is used and cared for. They should sort these words into two categories PAST and PRESENT. Together, watch the [River Kids](#) video.

EXPLAIN

After the video, give students a few minutes to add to their wordlists. Explain to the students that we are looking for emotive language (language that provokes an emotional responses) to use in poetry. Encourage students to be ambitious with their choice of vocabulary. As a group, share some of the language chosen. Explain that students will now write a poem that explores our relationship with the Murray River, both in the past and today. Explain that there are many different forms of poetry. You might like to look at Appendix A: *Types of Poetry* together or simply allow the students to experiment and be creative.

ELABORATE

Give students time to write their poems, encouraging them to re-read aloud to check the rhythm and tone. Afterwards, students may like to decide how their poems could be shared (e.g. Newsletter, assembly, school website/student blogs, work portfolios etc).

EVALUATE

Discuss:

- How has the relationship changed between the people and the river?
- Have these changes affected the health of the river? In what ways?

Curriculum Links



Victorian Curriculum

Foundation–10

Level 5		
ENGLISH	<u>Reading:</u> Examining literature	Understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification, in narratives, shape poetry, songs, anthems and odes (VCELT316)
	<u>Writing:</u> Creating texts	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience (VCELY329)
HISTORY	<u>Historical Concepts and Skills:</u> Historical sources as evidence	Describe perspectives and identify ideas, beliefs and values of people and groups in the past (VCHHC084)
	<u>Historical Concepts and Skills:</u> Continuity and change	Identify and describe patterns of continuity and change in daily life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 'native born' and migrants in the Australian colonies (VCHHC085)
Level 6		
ENGLISH	<u>Reading:</u> Examining literature	Identify the relationship between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narratives and poetry such as ballads, limericks and free verse (VCELT344)
	<u>Writing:</u> Creating texts	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (VCELY358)
HISTORY	<u>Historical Concepts and Skills:</u> Historical sources as evidence	Describe perspectives and identify ideas, beliefs and values of people and groups in the past (VCHHC084)
	<u>Historical Concepts and Skills:</u> Continuity and change	Identify and describe patterns of continuity and change in daily life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 'native born' and migrants in the Australian colonies (VCHHC085)

Sample Report Comments

{Name} has developed an understanding of the importance of the Murray River from the perspective of the people, both past and present.

{Name} understands that structure, rhythm and tone are important when writing poetry. {He/She} experimented with emotive language to create a poem about the Murray River.

References

Behind the News, 2016. *River Kids*. [online video] Available at:
<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/topic/riverkids.htm> [Viewed 06 July 2018].

Appendix A

Types of Poetry

Poetry is a very creative form of literature and it comes in lots of different shapes and sizes. When writing a poem, it is important to consider the structure, rhythm and tone. Below are some examples of different types of poetry.

<p style="text-align: center;">Couplet Poetry</p> <p>A poem that is made up of couplets. Couplets are pairs of lines that rhyme and have the same or similar number of syllables.</p> <p>e.g.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Playing with friends is such great fun, We sing, we dance, we jump, we run.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Shape Poetry</p> <p>A poem that describes something, written in the shape of that thing.</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">Shiny Bright and clear Sparkles in the sunlight Precious diamond Gem</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Haiku</p> <p>A three-line poem, where the first and last lines have five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables. They do not need to rhyme.</p> <p>e.g.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px; color: green;">Gliding through the air Singing a beautiful song Then, home to my nest</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Acrostic</p> <p>A poem where the first letter of each line spells out a word or phrase</p> <p>e.g.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px; color: green;">Sunny, bright days Playing outdoors Riding bikes Ice-creams! No more cold weather Gorgeous flowers</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Limerick</p> <p>A five-line poem, often humorous, written in an AABBA structure, meaning that there are two couplets and a final line that rhymes with, and has the same number of syllables as, the first two lines.</p> <p>e.g.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px; color: green;">I always wear my shoes with care, Because they are my favourite pair. My Mum says she won't buy me more, Because I wrecked my other four. Unlucky, but I guess that's fair!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Free Verse</p> <p>A poem that conveys feelings or ideas. It has no set rhythm or structure and usually does not rhyme.</p> <p>e.g.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px; color: green;">Scared, cold and alone, I trudge slowly on. The trees whisper their secrets, As I reflect on my own. Lost.</p>