

The GHB

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Overview

This explanatory text presents information about the Great Highland Bagpipes, including their history and how to play them.

Aside from informing, the text has a more subtle purpose – to persuade readers of the cultural value of bagpipes and the skill required to play them. The structure of the text (especially the inclusion of a player profile) and other writing devices serve to engage readers and build the author’s argument.

Suggested teaching purposes

- To support the students in developing the comprehension strategies of identifying the main idea, identifying the author’s purpose and point of view and **analysing and synthesising**.
- To engage the students in reading and thinking about the devices an author uses to present their point of view.

Suggested learning goal

I am learning to analyse why the author has written this text and how she has supported her key messages.

Success criteria

I will be successful when I have:

- identified and discussed the structure and other features of the text
- identified the key messages and the evidence the author uses to support these messages
- thought about and discussed the author’s purpose(s) in writing the text.

Features of the text

What features of this text support the teaching purposes?

- The two underlying purposes of the author – to inform and persuade
- The possible connection between the author and Nick Evans, the boy she profiles (which may link to her purpose)
- The ways the author engages the reader and builds her argument about bagpipes, for example, by using:
 - a profile of a young player, with enthusiastic direct quotes
 - the acronym GHB in the title (which sounds more interesting than Great Highland Bagpipes)
 - jokes and negative opinions about bagpipes (for example, “Not everyone loves the sound”)
 - a comparison between the historical and patriotic role of the bagpipes and that of the haka (something most students know and respect)
 - a fact box with interesting extra information (page 32)
 - a conversational tone
- The historical information about bagpipes, which links to their cultural

significance

- The technical information about bagpipes, including bulleted points about playing (page 31) and a labelled photograph (page 32)
- The theme of perseverance and practice in learning to play an instrument
- The way the end links to the introduction in its focus on the sound of the bagpipes.

Readability

Noun frequency level: 10–12 years for guided reading

What prior knowledge or experience might help my students to read this text?

- Their familiarity with pipe bands, bagpipes, or other wind instruments
- Their experiences of items of cultural significance
- Their experiences of learning to play instruments
- Their familiarity with devices used in persuasive texts.

What text features might challenge my students and require a prompt or a brief explanation?

- The references to parts of the bagpipe without links to photos (page 31)
- Particular words and concepts, including “Highland”, “Middle Ages”, “Patriotic”, “fired up”, “din”, “fulfilled a similar role to that of”, “deter”, “melody”, “hymns”, “squawky”, “co-ordinated”, “inflated”, “apply steady pressure”, “Governor-General”, “kilt”, “reeds”, “Assyrian”, “straddling”
- The passive structure of some sentences, including in the bullet points.

A framework for the lesson

How will I help my students to achieve the learning goal?

Before reading

- Briefly share experiences of learning to play instruments – the challenges involved and what is required to develop proficiency. Discuss instruments from different countries and cultures. (Making connections)
- Play the students a piece of bagpipe music and have them identify the instrument. Encourage them to share their knowledge about bagpipes, for example, where they are from and how culturally significant they are. Explore the assumptions they and others make about them: “What ideas do people have about bagpipes? What do you think of them and why?” Consider other culturally significant instruments, dances, and/or actions that might have a similar significance for groups of people. (Making connections; evaluating ideas and information)
- Look at the first page, draw out that the title is an acronym, and predict what it might mean. “Why do you think the author has used a title we don’t necessarily understand?” (Forming and testing hypotheses; identifying the author’s purpose and point of view)
- Share the learning goal and success criteria with the students.

During reading

Refer to Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8, pages 80–93, for information about deliberate acts of teaching.

- As the students read, encourage them to look for clues to the meanings of any unfamiliar words. (Inferring)

- Read the two jokes on page 29 and ensure that the students understand them. Notice the negativity about bagpipes. Discuss why the author might have chosen to start like this. Draw out the idea that some people find the loud noise of bagpipe music hard to listen to. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the author’s purpose and point of view)
- Have the students read to “international rugby game”. If necessary, help with the historical context of English–Scottish rivalry. Discuss the purpose of the haka and the students’ feelings when the haka is performed. “What has the author done here?” Elicit the idea that she has compared the impact of the bagpipe music with something many people know and respect. Draw out the idea that bagpipe music is culturally significant for the Scots. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the author’s purpose and point of view)
- Have the students read to the end of page 30. Elicit the text’s shift away from history to focus on Nick and his experiences. Discuss why the author has changed focus and specifically explore the direct speech and its effect. “What do Nick’s words add? What does Nick’s experience say about the bagpipes?” Draw out the idea that the bagpipes are a difficult instrument to master. You could also discuss what would make the shift clearer – for example, a subheading. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the author’s purpose and point of view)
- Ask the students to read the bullet points on page 31 and use the photographs next to them to work out what parts of the bagpipes are being referred to. “What is the purpose of the bullets?” Discuss the skill involved in playing the bagpipes. (Analysing and synthesising)
- Continue to the end of the page and discuss the main ideas that this passage communicates. Draw out the ideas of a bagpipe player’s enjoyment in being part of special events as well as the cultural significance of the bagpipes in these events and the importance of practice. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the main idea)
- “What do you think the author might have included on the final page of her article?” (Forming and testing hypotheses)
- Check the students’ predictions, have them read page 32, and discuss how the author wraps up the text – with Nick’s enthusiastic words and then with the fact box. Discuss what type of information the fact box conveys (interesting bits and pieces). “What effect does this ending have?” (Forming and testing hypotheses; analysing and synthesising)
- Discuss the labelled photograph and how it identifies the parts of the bagpipes. (Analysing and synthesising)

After reading

- As a group, review the structure of the information in the text. In a table like the one below, fill out the first column by drawing out headings that the information could come under. “What are one or two main messages about bagpipes that each section conveys?” Record the students’ ideas in the second column. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the main idea)

Types of information	Main messages
Historical and cultural significance (page 29)	The bagpipes are important historically and culturally.

An outline of Nick Evans' bagpipe experience (pages 29 and 30)	Nick loves the bagpipes and has worked hard to learn to play them.
Aspects to master when learning how to play (page 31)	Playing the bagpipes requires a lot of skill.
Playing in the pipe band (page 31)	Playing the bagpipes can take you to special places. Practice is important. Bagpipes have a cultural significance for many people in New Zealand.
Parts of the bagpipes (page 32)	Bagpipes are made up of different components.
Interesting facts (page 32)	Here are some cool things you might not know about bagpipes.

- With the table in mind, especially the second column, discuss the author's purpose(s) in writing the text. Support the students with uncovering the more subtle purpose (persuading readers of the value of bagpipes) over the more obvious one (informing). Review any other evidence in the text that supports the first purpose. For example, "Could the writer, Bettina Evans, be Nick Evans' mother?" (Identifying the author's purpose and point of view)
- In relation to the above, revisit ideas about why the author put the jokes at the start. Draw out the idea that they engage the reader and so give the author the chance to go on to "undo" misconceptions and negative opinions about the bagpipes. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the author's purpose and point of view)
- Explore the tone of the text and discuss in particular how Nick's words contribute to the positive, upbeat feeling. (Analysing and synthesising)
- Share opinions about how effective the text is. "How do you feel about bagpipes now? Has the author convinced you of their value? Why or why not?" (Evaluating ideas and information)
- Review the learning goal and success criteria and reflect with the students on how well the learning goal has been achieved. For example, "What do you think the main message in the text is? What was the author's purpose in writing the article? How did identifying and recording the information help you to come to your conclusions?" Note any teaching points for future sessions.

Links to further learning

What follow-up tasks will help my students to consolidate their new learning?

The students could:

- use the text as a model to write about something in a way that convinces others of its value (Analysing and synthesising; making connections)
- experiment with writing a negative portrayal of bagpipes (Analysing and synthesising; making connections)
- do further research about the bagpipes. (Making connections)