

The Young Ecoleaders Award

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Year 6



Overview

This TSM contains information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The materials provide many opportunities for revisiting the text.

The topic of environmentalism is a familiar one to most students and one of genuine concern. This play connects with that concern and the ways ordinary citizens can help address environmental issues, but it's primarily a spoof on awards ceremonies. This particular ceremony is marred by the foibles of the adult characters – the only trustworthy characters in the play are the young people who, in the end, turn the tables on the adults.

This play:

- follows the conventional play format and structure
- features lots of interruptions and verbal outbursts, making it a good play for discussing comic timing and performance
- makes playful use of language.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme

“U-Turn” SJ L3 Aug 2016 | “Baa-mite” SJ L3 Oct 2015 | “Car Games” SJ L3 Aug 2016

Text characteristics from the year 6 reading standard

We have retained the links to the National Standards while a new assessment and reporting system is being developed.

For more information on assessing and reporting in the post-National Standards era, see: <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-and-reporting-guide>

Let's hear what he has to say.

STEVIE SUMMER. Toby, what's up?

TOBY. Well, I want everyone at my school to eat less meat.

STEVIE SUMMER. Seriously! Tell me more.

TOBY. Farm animals produce methane – a greenhouse gas. Being vegetarian is better for the planet. Lentils don't burp! Ten families at our school have already pledged three meatless days a week.



abstract ideas, in greater numbers than in texts at earlier levels, accompanied by concrete examples in the text that help support the students' understanding

Mr Mayor? They don't look like fair-trade sneakers.

STEVIE SUMMER (quickly moving on). Better luck next time, Toby – if there is a next time!

STEVIE SUMMER. Our last finalist is Liv from Bay Intermediate. Incidentally, Liv's sister won the award last year, and her brother won the year before. What an incredible family! I'd love to know your secret. Welcome, Liv.

LIV comes to the front of the stage. **MAYOR SMILES-REDDY** claps loudly.

LIV. I'm running a campaign to encourage more parents to bike to work instead of drive.

STEVIE SUMMER. Radical! How come?

LIV. Cars burn fossil fuels. This is causing climate change.

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY (hissing out of his seat, clapping). Bravo!

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY. Picking up rubbish is all very well, but why not stop the use of

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY. Picking up rubbish is all very well, but why not stop the use of plastic in your community? Has your school banned plastic drink bottles, for example?

albeit a very modest one.

ARI'S MUM (calling out from the audience). Give the kid a chance!

STEVIE SUMMER (holding up a hand). I'm sorry, no interjections from the audience please. Hmm ... some tough questions there, Ari. Take a seat.

ARI sits down, upset. **ARI'S MUM** claps loudly.



sentences that vary in length and in structure (for example, sentences that begin in different ways and different kinds of complex sentences with a number of subordinate clauses)



illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs that clarify or extend the text and may require some interpretation

Reading standard: by the end of year 6

VOCABULARY

Possible supporting strategies

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “Ecoleaders”, “City Council”, “upcycled”, “tip”, “depot”, “aquarium”, “banned”, “albeit”, “interjections”, “methane”, “greenhouse gas”, “vegetarian”, “lentils”, “pledged”, “dramatic sigh”, “fair-trade sneakers”, “incidentally”, “running a campaign”, “fossil fuels”, “climate change”, “subdued”, “ambitious”, “assumed”, “boycotting”
 - Names that suggest the character of a person or what a place is like, including “Mayor Pat Smiles-Reddy”, “Stevie Summer”, “Harbourtown”, “Seaview School”
 - Colloquial language, including “Too much!”, “Surely not!”, “smackeroos”, “good for them”, “Better luck next time, Toby – if there is a next time!”, “Radical”, “How come?”, “folks”, “turn of events”, “count me out”, “Great”, “Are you guys in?”
 - Exclamations and fillers that reveal people’s feelings “Well ...”, “Hmm”, “Umm”, “Bravo!”, “Whoa!”, “Yay!”, “Boo!”, “Hiss!”
- Remind students of word-solving strategies to work out the meaning of words they don’t know, such as rereading, looking for context clues, breaking words into syllables and parts, and making connections with their prior knowledge. If necessary, model how to use these strategies when they encounter the word “upcycled”. *I know what “recycled” means, but what does “upcycled” mean? Is it literal – that you move the items up somewhere? Or is it used in a figurative way, like when somebody goes “up” in the world. Let’s read on. Ari says we made sculptures. That’s better than just taking things to a recycling depot. So I think “upcycling” is like “recycling” but reusing an item to make something better.*
 - Have the students scan the text to see if they can find clues to tell them about the place where these people live. Have them look at the names of the mayor and the host. *What do these names suggest to you about the personalities of these characters? Have you read other texts where the names gave a clue to people’s personalities?*
 - Explain that this text includes a lot of colloquial language. Consider a [Matching Exercise](#) in which students match definitions to the word or phrase.
 - Once the vocabulary words have been introduced, the students could work in pairs or small groups and use them in a word-sort activity, putting the words or phrases into predetermined categories (for example, environmental words, colloquial words, exclamations; or adverbs, adjectives, nouns).
 - *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
 - See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Possible supporting strategies

- Familiarity with the format of a play
 - Awareness that writers use words in a certain way for humour and that language can be used in unexpected ways to be funny
 - Familiarity with texts in which the adults are flawed and the children are more mature and come out on top
 - Experience or awareness of awards ceremonies
 - Familiarity with concepts about environmentalism
- Review the structure and conventions of a typical play. *What do we expect to find in a play?*
 - Remind students of other texts they’ve read where the children are smarter than the adults (for example, books by Roald Dahl).
 - Ask the students to brainstorm the sorts of projects an “ecoleader” might be involved in. Use this discussion to help the students make connections to some of the ideas that are not fully explained in the text but that may be available to them from their learning in science and technology.
 - Have them think, pair, and share about a time they have attended an awards ceremony (or seen one on television). As a class, list the things that might happen at a typical awards ceremony.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

Possible supporting strategies

- Conventional play format, with characters’ names in bold capitals and stage directions in brackets
 - The use of language to express the personality of the characters (“I’ve been called the mayor who cares”, “Too much, too much!”, “Sounds smelly”, “Five thousand smackeroos”)
 - Frequent interjections signalled by a dash
 - The use of bold text to indicate emphasis
- If necessary, explain the use of italics and brackets for stage directions and capitals for the names of the characters.
 - Read the first page, down to “Ari, from Seaview School”. Prompt the students to explore it as a class, focusing on the characters of the mayor and the host. *What have we already learnt about Mayor Smiles-Reddy and Stevie Summer? What are the clues we get from the script?*
 - Have the students reread this first section, using expression, pace, and gesture to reveal the personalities and feelings of the two characters.



Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

– Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 3 – Ideas: Select, form, and communicate ideas on a range of topics.

– Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

THE ARTS (Drama)

Level 3 – Communicating and Interpreting: Present and respond to drama, identifying ways in which elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies combine to create meaning in their own and others' work.

Possible first reading purpose

- To enjoy a humorous play in which a group of students take control of a chaotic situation.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To explore how an writer has used humour to parody what happens at an awards ceremony
- To identify how humour has been used to engage the audience
- To compare the play to other similar stories or plays where adults are portrayed as flawed characters
- To perform the play, using timing and delivery to bring out the humour and engage an audience.

Possible writing purposes

- To turn a familiar story into a play
- To write a humorous sketch on an event that has happened in your class
- To describe a moment in time at an awards ceremony you have attended.



Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts; Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

The Arts (Drama) Communicating and interpreting: Present and respond to drama, identifying ways in which elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies combine to create meaning in their own and others' work.

First reading

- Note that the text is a play. Prompt prior knowledge of plays by having the students think, pair, and share the similarities and differences between plays and narrative texts.
- Invite the students to use the title and the picture on page 2 to infer what the setting might be. Confirm that this play is set at an awards ceremony for some young people who have been leading environmental initiatives. Discuss what sort of work that might involve.
- Share the purpose for reading with the students.
- Ask the students to read the whole play to themselves, discussing any confusions or challenges.

If the students require more scaffolding

- Students may find the swift changes from character to character confusing. Explain the consistent format, that is, capitals for the characters' names, a different colour for each character's name when speaking, and italics for the stage directions. Point out the punctuation markers that signal an interruption or that someone is confused.
- English language learners may find this play challenging because of its rapid pace and play on words. Consider providing them with a brief plot summary prior to their first reading.

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

Where possible, have the students work in pairs to discuss the following questions and prompts.

The teacher

Ask the students to identify parts of the play that are humorous and think about what makes those parts funny.

Encourage them to evaluate the success of the play.

- *How does the writer reveal the personalities of the characters?*
- *What has the writer done to make it funny?*
- *Has she succeeded? Why or why not?*
- *Have you read other stories or plays where the adults behave "like children" and the children behave like adults? How do they compare?*

The teacher

Conduct a **Mind Mirror** activity in which the students work in pairs or small groups to create a poster based on one of the characters. Their poster has an outline of their character's head. The students select a specific part of the play and use their poster to depict:

- what their character was feeling at the time
- what they were thinking
- what questions were in the character's mind.

They illustrate their ideas with quotes and drawings.

The teacher

Prompt the students to recall the features of the text that tell us how it should be read.

Introduce terminology related to drama: props, action, script, characterisation, comedy, audience, and roles.

Lead a discussion about the techniques needed to satisfy an audience, such as maintaining pace and speaking clearly and with expression.

Invite the students to read through the script in parts. Provide each student with a paper copy of the play. When characters have been allocated, provide highlighters and ask the students to highlight their character's name each time they speak or are mentioned in the stage directions.

They could record audio versions of the play that they can then listen to and compare.

The students:

- identify and discuss the interactions between characters that reveal their flawed nature, for example: "I'm your host, Stevie Summer, a local personality. And you'll get to enjoy that personality tonight!"
- evaluate the *writer's* use of language overall throughout the play and how this contributes to the humour
- make statements about whether or not the *writer* was successful in creating a humorous play, backing up their statements with examples from the text.

The students:

- draw conclusions about the characters from details in the text
- with help, synthesise their understandings to form a general understanding of the characters' personalities, attributes, and flaws with close reference to the text.

The students:

- experiment with reading the play in a way that emphasises the humour
- record audio versions of the play, replay the recordings, and compare the different versions
- if they wish, rehearse the play, in character, and perform it for an audience.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I noticed the way you used gesture and facial expression to communicate Liv's growing discomfort. You worked out that she would have been worried from the start and that she didn't like her uncle's behaviour. You had thought about the author's purpose and what we learn about Liv that provided clues about how she was feeling.*

METACOGNITION

- *How realistic is this play? Can you think of occasions when young people behaved better than adults? What do you think about that – can adults learn from young people?*



Reading standard: by the end of year 6



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 3 – Select, form, and communicate ideas on a range of topics. Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

The Arts (Drama) Level 3 – Communicating and Interpreting: Present and respond to drama, identifying ways in which elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies combine to create meaning in their own and others' work.

Text excerpts from “The Young Ecoleaders Award”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 4

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY (*sitting forward with a serious expression*). Yes, I do. Ari, you know that some sea creatures die from eating plastic?

ARI (*nodding sadly*). Yes. That's why I'm doing this.

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY. But are you doing enough?

ARI (*a little taken aback*). Well ...

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY. Picking up rubbish is all very well, but why not stop the use of plastic in your own community? Has your school banned plastic bottles, for example?

ARI. No, but –

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY (*interrupting*). Or cling wrap? Or straws?

ARI. No, but next year –

MAYOR SMILES-REDDY (*sitting back*). No more questions. It's a start, Ari ... albeit a very modest one.

USING DIALOGUE TO REVEAL CHARACTER

Writers can use dialogue to reveal things about their characters.


Sometimes, we find out about a character from what other people say about them or from their own explanations. But a lot of the fun of reading is in the detective work – using inference and making predictions. Here, we see the mayor interrupting and asking a lot of questions. He is wearing a serious expression, but the interruptions and the unfairness of the questions prompt us to think:

- *Why does the mayor keep interrupting?*
- *Why is he so focused on what the school hasn't done instead of what it has done?*

Discuss the role of dialogue in a play and the importance of including clues to show the reader (or audience) what a character is like rather than telling them directly.

Have the students select a familiar text that they find funny. Have them choose a particular episode that reveals something about one or two of the characters.

- *You are going to write some dialogue in the form of a script. The dialogue should include clues that help us understand the personalities of the people involved. Remember, where you can, “show – don't tell”.*

DIGITAL TOOLS  The students could use Google Docs to allow for sharing, commenting, and easy editing of the script in the activities that follow.

Have the students test their scripts by asking a partner to identify what the dialogue reveals about the characters and the clues that help them make this inference.

- *What were you trying to reveal about your characters?*
- *Did your partner read your clues as you intended?*
- *How might you change your script to help your audience read between the lines to work out what a character is like?*

Page 3

STEVIE SUMMER. Beautiful people! Welcome to Harbourtown's annual Young Ecoleaders Award. I'm your host, Stevie Summer, a local personality. And you'll get to enjoy that personality tonight!

He flashes a big smile at ARI, TOBY, and LIV. There is an awkward pause, and they look confused before politely clapping.

USING ACTION TO REVEAL CHARACTER

Stage directions do more than reveal how an actor should move or speak their lines. They provide clues to the character's motivations and personality. The big smile Stevie Summer flashes at Ari, Toby, and Liv reinforces the image we are developing of a man star struck with himself. The awkward pause and look of confusion indicate that the students are surprised that their host thinks the evening is more about him than about them, and the polite clapping shows that they are more mature than him.

Discuss how words and actions combine to create meaning in a staged presentation. Prompt discussion about performances the students have seen or participated in.

- *What did the actors do to help you understand what they were thinking, feeling, or wondering about?*
- *How did this help you understand their personalities?*
- *How did this affect your response to the play – whether you found it funny, or sad or thought-provoking?*

Have the students write brief stage directions to help a director and cast to understand the motivations and actions of a character.

Develop word banks of suitable adverbs and adjectives that describe how someone might say something or move, which the students can refer to.

Text excerpts from
“The Young Ecoleaders Award”

Examples of text
characteristics

Teacher
(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 7

LIV. Great – because I’m going to use this money to set up a young ecoleaders festival. All the schools in Harbourtown can come together to share ideas and help each other. (She looks at **ARI** and **TOBY**.) Are you guys in?

ARI. Of course.

ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

Writers draw on an awareness of their audience to decide how to engage them. They make choices about content, vocabulary, the way their characters will speak the lines, and the stage directions they need to add.

Have the students work in groups and present a scene.

- You will need to select one of your scripts and get it ready for a performance. The script you select doesn’t need to be perfect. Your goal is to entertain your audience, so choose one that you think our class will enjoy.
- When a writer works with a director and actors to put on a play for the first time, the whole group often makes changes. As you rehearse, be prepared to revise your play so that it succeeds in being entertaining.

Together develop a checklist of features to include. The students can refer to the checklist when writing and checking. Support the students to develop their scripts and prepare their performances. Encourage collaboration and make this an enjoyable experience.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- As you developed your script, I saw lots of scribbling out and rewriting. You responded very well to the feedback that the first script had too much explanation. The dialogue you’ve created is very funny – I can see the growing confusion that comes out of one simple mistake at the start!

METACOGNITION

- What made you decide to choose to develop this script? What were you and your group thinking about when you revised it for your performance?



Writing standard: by the end of year 6



The Literacy Learning Progressions