

FACT FILE

The two **Chinese characters** for 'China' literally mean 'Middle Country', a reference to China's ancient title as the Middle Kingdom.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

stylised an artistic rather than a realistic depiction

The stylised hamburger was the latest logo for the new fast food chain.

QUICK 5

Ask students to research the meaning and origins of a Chinese character. As a class, make a set of flashcards and memorise the meaning of each character.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Vocabulary assistance

'Cultural identity' is the feeling that you belong to a certain group of people. In *Chinese Cinderella*, Adeline's cultural identity is her Chinese heritage.

Scaffolding task

When students complete **Breakaway task 9c**, a clarification may be needed for the functional verb 'evaluate': evaluate means 'to decide whether something is correct and accurate, based on the facts and information'.

For **Breakaway task 10a**, EAL/D students from Chinese, Japanese or Korean backgrounds may like to share with the class some other characters (*kanzi*, *kanji*, *hanja*) in their first language that are 'pictographs' (i.e. the character looks like the picture it represents).

BREAKAWAY TASKS: ANSWERS

Go to pages 257–8.

PEARSON english A.B.

For more information and activities on similes, refer to Unit 19 of the Year 8 activity book.

Breakaway tasks

Remembering

- 1 What does Adeline say that hurts Ye Ye?
- 2 In ancient times, what was used as a unit of money?

Understanding

- 3 List three arguments Ye Ye uses to convince Adeline that it is important for her to learn Chinese.
- 4 Why does Adeline say that Ye Ye's dictionary is not a real dictionary?
- 5 Explain what Ye Ye means when he says, 'Though life has to be lived forward, it can only be understood backward.'

Applying

- 6 a Conduct an internet search for ten more Chinese characters. These characters should be related to your own life in some way.
 - b Using the headings in the table below, copy each character and write the English word for it. Then find out the etymology (word origin and history) of the English word.

Character	English word	Etymology



Etymology is the study of the origin, history and changes of form in a word or words.

Analysing

- 7 What simile does Adeline use to show that she thinks her study of Chinese is a mindless activity?



A **simile** is a phrase that describes something by comparing two different things, and contains the word 'like' or 'as... as'. For example, 'Harry slithered up behind them like a snake in tall grass.' Here, the simile 'like a snake' describes Harry. It tells us that Harry is quiet and sneaky and a little bit dangerous.

- 8 When Adeline exclaims, 'I only want to learn English, not Chinese,' she is rejecting a part of her identity, a part of who she is. Why does Ye Ye think her cultural identity is so important?

Evaluating

- 9 Ye Ye predicts that in a hundred years, 'the world's many languages will be distilled down to three: Chinese, English and Spanish'.
 - a Research to find out which countries around the world have English, Chinese or Spanish as their primary language.
 - b On a map of the world, colour in these countries, using a different colour for each language.
 - c Using your general knowledge and your newly discovered information, evaluate Ye Ye's prediction. Do you think it is a valid prediction? Explain your answer.

Creating

- 10 Carefully re-read Ye Ye's explanation of the character 貝 (be). Note that the character is a stylised illustration of the thing it represents, and the characters are combined to form new words.
 - a Choose one of the groups of words below or choose your own words and design your own symbolic representation of them.
 - to throw/to catch/sport
 - lyrics/melody/music
 - thunder/lightning/storm
 - aeroplane/passport/to travel
 - b Present your designs to the class, explaining your inspiration for their design and how they resemble the words.



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Geoff Havel

Grave of the Roti Men is the story of a young Australian boy, Aaron, who goes to the small fishing village of Pepela on the island of Roti, Indonesia, to spend a month with his father. Once there, Aaron meets a local boy, Husni, who lives a life that is very different from Aaron's. As the two become friends, Aaron learns a lot about Husni's way of life.



Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country after China, India and the United States of America.



A traditional Indonesian fishing village

GRAVE OF THE ROTI MEN

By Geoff Havel

One morning Aaron found Husni sitting alone on the jetty throwing bits of shell into the water. He wasn't smiling.

'What's wrong?' Husni stood up. 'Soon I must go fishing. My father died owing a man some money. Now I must work on the man's boat to pay back my family's debt.'

Aaron tried to follow Husni's reasoning. It didn't sound like a fair arrangement.

'But that was two years ago.' 'Yes, but I am old enough to work now,' Husni explained.

'That sucks!' 'It is business and it is the will of Allah.' Aaron knew better than to argue. 'So show me the boat.'

Husni pointed to a battered fishing boat. Its sides curved low towards the water. Streaks of rust ran everywhere.

'That old thing!' said Aaron, shocked. Husni shrugged. 'Many times this boat has sailed.'

'But it hasn't even got a motor.' Again, Husni shrugged. 'No motor, no radio. That is Australia's rules.'

'What's the motor and the radio got to do with Australia?'

'If we fish in the MOU we must use traditional boats,' Husni answered.

'This is a traditional boat?' Husni nodded. Aaron frowned. 'What's the MOU?'

'It is the area where Australia says we can still fish.'

'So how do you find the islands?'

'The stars, a compass.' Aaron couldn't believe what he was hearing.

Source: Geoff Havel, *Grave of the Roti Men*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003

FACT FILE

Geoff Havel (1955–) is a writer and primary school teacher. He was born in Papua New Guinea and moved to Western Australia; he now lives in Perth.

Roti is a small Indonesian island north-west of Australia. According to legend, its name comes from an encounter between a local person and a lost Portuguese sailor. The local introduced himself as Roti, and the name stuck!

VOCABULARY BUILDER

jetty a wharf or pier that extends from the shore

The fisherman directed his boat towards the jetty, eager to get his catch home.

MOU Memorandum of Understanding, or an agreement between two parties

The MOU explained how the two companies would work together.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Reading strategy

After students have read the extract from *Grave of the Roti Men* aloud, have them write five questions (who, what, where, when, why) for their partner to answer. This promotes comprehension practice, questioning skills and conversational opportunities for EAL/D students. For example:

- 1 Who is this story about? (Husni and Aaron)
- 2 What sort of boat is it? (a battered, low-lying, rusted fishing boat)
- 3 Where is this story set? (Roti, Indonesia)
- 4 When is this story set? (after Husni's father's death)
- 5 Why does Husni have to go fishing? (to pay back his dead father's debt)

Homework

Form debating groups of six people each. Over the next week homework is to prepare a debate to perform in front of the class.

Note for teacher: If there are extra students that are not part of a group of students, they can be assigned to groups as a 'research assistant'. These extra students can also chair and time the debates.

Topics for the debates include:

- That English must be spoken by every citizen of Australia.
- That our cultural heritage is just as important as our future.
- That our families are the most important influence in our lives.
- That we are all actually different.

BREAKAWAY TASKS: ANSWERS

Go to page 257.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Scaffolding task

The debate topic in **Breakaway task 11** could be reworded into simpler language for EAL/D students:

Official topic: The disadvantages of the MOU between Australia and Indonesia outweigh the advantages.

Reworded topic: There are more bad things about the MOU between Australia and Indonesia than good things.

This debating task requires a set structure that students need to follow:

- 1 In groups of six, three students are chosen to argue *for* the topic (affirmative) and three students are chosen to argue *against* the topic (negative).
- 2 The speakers for each side decide who will be the first, second and third speaker.
- 3 Speakers plan their arguments to present to the audience.
- 4 When each student stands up to present their arguments, they must first rebut the other team's argument. This means that they must explain why the other team's arguments are wrong. They can then speak about their own arguments and why they are right.

Breakaway tasks

Remembering

- 1 What is Husni doing when Aaron finds him?
- 2 Describe the boat that Husni will be working on.

Understanding

- 3 Why is Husni unhappy?
- 4 List three things that shock Aaron from his conversation with Husni.

Applying

- 5 Find out what MOU stands for and write, in one sentence, what it is about.
- 6 Find a map that includes Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Use your atlas to locate the following places: Roti, Pepela, Broome, Darwin and the Timor Sea. Mark them on your map.

Analysing

- 7 Why do you think the story might be called *Grave of the Roti Men*?
- 8 Why is Husni able to accept his fate so calmly?
- 9 What is Aaron learning about life from this conversation with Husni?

Evaluating

- 10 Use your research skills to find out about the effect of the MOU on fishermen from villages like Pepela, and its purpose in protecting the reefs near Australia's northern coast from overfishing.



A **debate** is a formal verbal argument presented by two teams. There is an affirmative team, who argue in support of the topic, and a negative team, who argue against it. Each team has three speakers. They speak in the following order:

1 First speaker for the affirmative	2 First speaker for the negative
3 Second speaker for the affirmative	4 Second speaker for the negative
5 Third speaker for the affirmative	6 Third speaker for the negative

6 PEARSON english 8

HELPFUL HINTS

Breakaway tasks 5 and 10—A simple internet search of 'MOU' will bring up thousands of irrelevant results. Discuss ways to refine this search by combining more specific search terms, such as 'Indonesia', 'Australia' and 'fishing'. Scaffold the research process by brainstorming key questions regarding the MOU and discussing reliable sources of information, such as government websites and respected media outlets.

- 11 Use your information to prepare a debate on the following topic: 'The disadvantages of the MOU between Australia and Indonesia outweigh the advantages.'

Creating

- 12 Design a board game in which the aim is to catch as many fish as possible. Your board game should use navigating by the stars and compass points to determine the direction a player moves and use weather conditions to provide unexpected twists and turns.

DID YOU KNOW...

When navigating by the stars, the most important constellation in the Southern Hemisphere is the Southern Cross, which is also known as 'Cruis' or 'Cruz'. The most important navigational star in the Northern Hemisphere is called Polaris and is part of the constellation called Ursa Minor. For more information, check out the web destinations or try searching for 'star navigation' with your favourite search engine.



The Southern Cross (left) and Ursa Minor (right)

Craig Silvey

Craig Silvey grew up in Western Australia and *Jasper Jones* is his second novel. It is a 'coming of age' novel and tells the story of Charlie Bucktin, who lives in the small Australian mining town of Corrigan. The year is 1965 and Charlie is about to have the summer of his life! Dangerous, rebellious Jasper Jones wakes him up one night and draws him into his horrifying, devastating secret. Charlie falls in love for the first time and struggles to keep the peace with his fiery mother. But luckily for Charlie, he has his best friend Jeffrey Lu by his side.

Jeffrey Lu is Vietnamese and with the Vietnam War (1955–1975) in full swing, life in this small Aussie town is not so easy for him either. Jeffrey is obsessed with cricket and he and Charlie spend much of their time at the nets, or discussing life's bigger questions. In the following extract, Jeffrey and Charlie are discussing the merits of various superheroes. Jeffrey has just finished explaining why Superman is the greatest superhero, but Charlie disagrees. He's nominated Batman as the greatest.

Breakaway task 11—This task can be simplified by turning it into a whole class debate. Ask all those who support the statement to stand on one side of the room, and those who oppose the statement to stand on the other side. Students from each side take turns to explain their view and respond to the views of others. At any time, students may change their minds and cross the floor to join the opposing group. Continue until one side achieves a large majority.

JASPER JONES

By Craig Silvey



'Chuck, you're an idiot! That is the stupidest thing I have ever heard. Batman isn't even a superhero!'

It's my turn to stop. 'Shut your mouth!' I slap the ball out of his hands. It skips down the street.

'It's true! He's not a superhero! 'Jeffrey, you're an idiot!'

'You're an idiot! Batman doesn't have any superpowers. He's not superhuman. He's not super. So therefore he can't be a superhero.'

'Jeffrey, what are you talking about? He's Batman.'

'What does that even mean? Batman is just an eccentric billionaire with insomnia! He's a vigilante, not a superhero. Because he doesn't have superpowers. He just has a cool car and a handy belt.'

'Jeffrey, you are insane. For a start, I disagree fundamentally that you need superpowers to be a superhero. But I would argue that he is super anyway, given that super just means greater than usual. So in every aspect he is super human.'

'So Doug Walters is a superhero, because he possesses superhuman abilities?'

'No, Doug Walters is a maniac. Are you listening? Batman is the ultimate human. He is flawless, yet he is capable of being flawed. He's mastered the way of the ninja. He's one of the world's greatest scientists and detectives. His body is in peak condition. He is a man of unfathomable mental toughness. He is human perfection. He's a Renaissance man. And it's the fact that he is just a normal guy with a bum load of money and a burning vendetta that makes him the greatest. And because he can fight

DID YOU KNOW...

The term 'Renaissance man' grew out of the period in history known as the Renaissance. It is used to describe someone who is very knowledgeable and talented in many areas. Leonardo Da Vinci is a perfect example.

against and alongside people with superpowers. He is a superhero, and you, sir, are an idiot.'

'Charles, you are the very essence of stupidity. I'll say this slowly: Batman does not have superpowers. He can't be a superhero.'

I know I'm winning when he calls me Charles.

'He doesn't need superpowers. That's my point. You're an idiot. He can hold his own. He has an alter ego. He has a costume. He fights for Truth and Justice. He has arch enemies. And he does all this without any weird mutations. He's just really determined.'

That's what makes him interesting. The fact that with enough dedication and desire, we could all be Batman. Batman. Batpeople. And that's what makes him the best.'

Jeffrey closes his eyes and puffs his cheeks. 'You know I'm right, Jeffrey. It's just like Lex Luthor doesn't need superpowers to be a supervillain. It's called context. Look it up. It's a goddamned comic. I win. You're wrong. Doug Walters is a hero. Muhammad Ali is a hero. Batman is a superhero. Simple. And the thing that makes him the best superhero is exactly your stupid, ignorant assertion: that he's just a guy. He is fallible. And unlike Superman, he requires courage.'

Source: Craig Silvey, *Jasper Jones*, Allen & Unwin, 2009

Craig Silvey

Life: Cultural contexts 7

VOCABULARY BUILDER

eccentric odd or unusual behavior

My eccentric neighbour tans himself in the moonlight.

insomnia a condition that makes sleep very difficult

The doctor thought that Rebecca's insomnia was stress-related.

vigilante a person who illegally punishes someone they think has broken the law

The police warned the community that vigilantes would be punished if they tried to take the law into their own hands.

fundamentally basically, at the very core

The two sides were fundamentally opposed to each other, making negotiations difficult.

unfathomable impossible to understand or measure

The teacher was frustrated by Ben's unfathomable refusal to attempt the exercise.

vendetta a bitter feud

The vendetta between the two families was so old, nobody could remember how it started.

assertion a statement without evidence

The judge criticised the witness for making assertions without evidence to support her claims.

fallible able to make errors or mistakes

'Don't worry, we are all fallible,' Kim's father assured her.

FACT FILE

Craig Silvey (1982–) is an Australian novelist who also plays in an indie rock band called 'The Nancy Sikes'.

Doug Walters (1945–) was a batsman and part-time bowler in the Australian cricket team from 1965 to 1981.

Muhammad Ali (1942–) was a world-champion boxer famous for his showmanship.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Grammar practice

Explain to students: An adjective is a word that describes a noun.

After students have read the *Jasper Jones* extract, ask them to list all the adjectives that describe Batman (eccentric, flawless, unfathomable mental toughness, determined, interesting, ultimate human, world's greatest scientist, peak condition, normal guy).

Meaning making

MI: verbal-linguistic, interpersonal

Chuck uses two descriptions of Batman: an 'eccentric billionaire with insomnia' and 'a vigilante'. Have students form pairs to explain what Chuck means by these descriptions. Ask: What is he insinuating about Batman with the first description? What's the difference between a superhero and a vigilante? Is Chuck right?

The craft of writing

MI: verbal-linguistic

Have students explore the role of pronouns in this extract from *Jasper Jones* and work out who is saying what in each sentence and how the pronouns work.

This is an excellent opportunity to see how dialogue should be written. Ask: How much do we rely on a new line to work out who is speaking? Notice too how little narration there is. Ask: What is the use of the narration in the extract? How does the author manage to get the mood/tone across with so little narrative input?

BREAKAWAY TASKS: ANSWERS

Go to page 258.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Vocabulary assistance

Some useful sentence starters for EAL/D students who have difficulty structuring an essay:

Introduction

- In my opinion ...
- I think that ...

Body paragraphs

- Firstly ...
- Secondly ...
- Thirdly ...
- Finally ...

Conclusion

- To conclude, I believe that ...

Breakaway tasks

Remembering

- 1 According to Charlie, what does 'super' mean?
- 2 How does Charlie know that he is winning the argument?

Understanding

- 3 What does Charlie see as the key difference between Superman and Batman?
- 4 What might Jeffrey be thinking when he 'closes his eyes and puffs his cheeks'?
- 5 With a partner, use the dialogue in the extract to create a mini-performance. Try to capture the character of each boy and the nature of their friendship in your performance. Present your performance to the class.
- 6 The boys use many interesting and useful words, such as 'vigilante', 'eccentric', 'insomnia', 'unfathomable', 'vendetta', 'assertion' and 'fallible'. Look these words up in a dictionary to learn their meaning.

Applying

- 7 Write a short piece (no more than 150 words), using each of the words in Question 6.
- 8 What was the last friendly debate you had with a friend? Describe your friend's point of view and your own.

Analysing

- 9 It is evident from their conversation that Charlie and Jeffrey are very good friends. What sorts of things do they say to each other that give this impression?
- 10 What is the effect of the italics that have been used throughout the extract?
- 11 Charlie tells Jeffrey, 'It's called context.' There are many contextual references used in the extract that tell us a lot about the place (Australia) and the time (1965). Use your research skills to find out who Doug Walters and Muhammad Ali are. Explain why they would be heroes in the boys' eyes.



Context refers to the circumstances in which an event occurs. The context of a novel refers to the time and place in which the story occurs.

- 12 a The boys argue about the word 'super'. Which definition would you agree with?
 - b Look up the word origin of 'super' to find out which boy's definition is more likely to be correct. Why do you think the meaning of words such as this can be debated?
- 13 At the end of the extract, Charlie refers to Superman and a quality that he lacks. Based on this paragraph, what do you predict Charlie will argue next about what makes someone a superhero?

Evaluating

- 14 Copy the table below into your notebook.

Batman is the greatest superhero.

Arguments for (Charlie)	Arguments against (Jeffrey)

List Charlie's and Jeffrey's arguments in the appropriate columns. Evaluate the arguments of each boy. Which argument do you think is the most convincing and why?

Creating

- 15 Who is your favourite, all-time superhero? Who do you think is the greatest of them all? Make your selection and then construct an argument to convince your peers that your choice deserves the title of the greatest superhero of all. Make a list of five arguments in support of your choice. Use each argument as the topic sentence of a paragraph. Write your argumentative essay.



A **paragraph** is a collection of sentences that are logically arranged to develop and explain a central idea. The central idea is usually contained in a single sentence called the **topic sentence**.

When you are constructing an argument, you should state your argument clearly in your topic sentence. The rest of the paragraph should offer further detail about your argument, explaining it clearly and offering evidence to support it.

Strands in action

Podcasting life

You have started to explore the diversity of life in places close to Australia through examining some different texts, but you can look even closer to home to see examples of various life experiences. Look around at your classmates; everyone's life is different.

Core task

Interview one of your classmates to find out what makes their life unique.

- a By drawing names out of a hat, organise yourselves into partners.
- b Spend ten minutes in conversation with your partner. Take five minutes each to tell the other person as much general information about your life as you can.
- c Working separately, write a list of ten questions about the things that interest you most about your partner's life.
- d Interview your partner and record it as a podcast.



Effective interview questions are **open-ended**, which means they require more than a one-word answer. If you don't get enough interesting information from your interviewee, prompt them for further detail by asking questions like the following:

- What did you mean by that?
- How did that make you feel?
- What happened next?
- Can you tell me more about that?

Extra tasks

- 1 As a class, listen to the podcasts you created from the Core task. Consider what you have heard and write a one-sentence statement about the diversity of life in your classroom. Combine your statement with an image to create a poster for display in your classroom.
- 2 The texts you have read in this module feature characters from China, Indonesia, Australia and Vietnam, and span the years 1941 to the early 2000s.
 - a Construct a timeline that begins in 1941 and ends in 2003. For each country, include five major events from this time period.
 - b Write the events for each country in a different colour.
 - c Write a paragraph underneath the timeline that summarises what has been happening in the Asia-Pacific region over the last seventy years.
- 3 Host a lunch banquet to which every student brings a dish to share. Every dish should represent a different culture. Present your dish to the class, explaining what it is and where it comes from, before you begin eating.
- 4 What have you learnt from this exploration of the diversity of life? Write a one-page reflection.
- 5 Consider all the characters you met while you were reading the extracts in the previous pages: Adeline, Aaron, Husni, Jeffrey and Charlie. Which character would you most like to add as a friend on Facebook® and why? Write them an email explaining why you think you would enjoy connecting with them on Facebook.
- 6 Working with a partner, brainstorm ways that you could promote further understanding and appreciation among young people about the diversity of other people's lives, using music, sport and art. Choose your best three ideas and present them to the class.

Extension

In order to understand more about the context of Australian life, conduct research on one aspect of the following topics. You can choose your own topic but you will need your teacher's approval.

- a The effect of the post-war 1950s migrant boom on Australian life
- b The Asian immigration boom in the 1970s
- c The Snowy River Mountain Scheme
- d Bureau of Statistics
 - Ethnic diversity in Australia
 - Religious affiliations
 - Gender breakdowns
- e Chinese immigration to Australia before and during the Gold Rushes
- f The state of Australia in the twenty-first century
 - Current affairs—issues, concerns in everyday life
 - International relations
 - Political make-up and trends
- g Different rituals and life events observed by various ethnic and cultural groups in Australia.
 - Have they changed due to immigration?

Methods of presentation for this research may include:

- a large poster with pictures and explanatory text
- graphs and charts for display with accompanying explanation of results
- use of information technology tools to display results, including use of electronic whiteboards and presentation software
- a formal report.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

diversity a range of differences
The Amazon rainforest has the greatest diversity of species of anywhere in the world.

HELPFUL HINTS

Extra task 2—Remind students that a timeline should contain a title and a key. The gap between each year should be evenly spaced, with each year marked clearly in the correct position.

RELATED READING

- Uyen Loewald, 'Be Good Little Migrants' in *Growing Up Asian in Australia*, Alice Pung (ed.) Black Inc, 2008
- Lat (Mohammad Kalid), *Kampung Boy*, Wilkins Fargo, 2005
- Prue Mason, *Camel Rider*, Puffin, 2004
- Neil Grant & David Williams (eds), *From Kinglake to Kabul*, Allen & Unwin, 2011

WEBLINKS

- Visit the web destinations at **Pearson Reader** to access:
- the Asia Society website, which gives information on current issues, arts and culture, history and much more
 - the ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image) website where you can view a range of interviews with people talking about Australian identity (including views on Indigenous identity, migration and place).



EAL/D SUPPORT

Scaffolding task

Extra task 4 uses difficult language that may not be accessible to EAL/D students. This task can be scaffolded by implementing a number of preliminary steps:

First, rewrite the task question in basic language:

Official question: What have you learnt from this exploration of the diversity of life?

Reworded question: Everybody is different and comes from a different background. What have you learnt about this?

Then ask the following questions:

- 1 After you have listened to your class's podcasts and celebrated a lunch banquet, what do you notice about being in a class with people from different backgrounds?
- 2 How do you feel about living in a world with so many different cultures? Is it good or bad? Why?
- 3 Give an example of a time when you have interacted with people from another culture. Was it easy or difficult? Why?

Students can use their answers to these questions as a basis for their one-page reflection.

Curriculum links

This module, 'Life is curious', engages directly with the following Strands and Sub-strands:

	Examples
Language	
✓ Language for interaction	• rhetorical devices (irony, parody)
✓ Text structure and organisation	• punctuation (quotation marks)
✓ Expressing and developing ideas	• vocabulary
Literature	
✓ Literature and context	• exploring bizarre life experiences from unfamiliar contexts
✓ Creating literature	• including Odd Spot tasks
Literacy	
✓ Texts in context	• examining Victorian era language
✓ Interacting with others	• using skills in discussions, games and presentations • delivering presentations, including the ringmaster spiel
✓ Interpreting, analysing, evaluating	• evaluating content and terminology (e.g. in 'Fleas to Meet You')
✓ Creating texts	• informative, imaginative and persuasive texts, including an Odd Spot, report and a letter • using software in the True/False game

Text types and skills

Throughout this module, students will engage with the following text types:

- photographs
- illustrations
- narratives (novel, non-fictional accounts)
- news stories
- tables
- websites.

By engaging with these text types, students will develop their skills in the following areas:

- reading
- viewing
- listening
- speaking (including discussing and presenting)

Life is curious

Have you ever heard the saying that truth is stranger than fiction? It is easy to think that the weird and the wonderful belong in novels and films, but if you keep your eyes and ears open, you'll discover some weird and wonderful stuff going on in real life.

The internet is a treasure trove of the truly bizarre and amazing. And check out your daily newspapers! They're full of snippets of information from around the globe that you would never have dreamed possible.



10 PEARSON english 8

Out of the ordinary

The era between 1837 and 1901 is often referred to as the Victorian era. It was a time of great change and progress, particularly in the area of science. As a result, there was a great interest among the population for all things scientific. The natural world was considered a very unusual place indeed and all sorts of curious animals—and unusual examples of human life—were put on display for people to see. Freak shows were particularly popular during the Victorian period, when people from all classes flocked to gawp at natural curiosities.

The Victorian era was the age of P. T. Barnum, of Barnum and Bailey Circus fame, and of Frank Buckland. Frank Buckland was a surgeon and a naturalist who was known to be one of the most eccentric men of the Victorian era. He was famous for keeping all kinds of exotic pets, including meerkats, otters, scorpions and monkeys, and for eating anything except earwigs, which he claimed were horribly bitter. If there was something mysterious or odd going on, Frank Buckland was sure to find out about it and, lucky for us, he was a passionate writer as well.

In the extract opposite, Frank Buckland describes his encounter with a man who created his very own flea circus.

DO YOU KNOW...

The Victorian era was named after Queen Victoria, who reigned in England from 1837 to 1901. Her reign was the longest in British history.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

freak show an exhibition of natural rarities and shocking performances
Freak shows were a popular form of entertainment before the invention of the television.

gawp to look at with amazement
'Stop gawping!' Jenny's mother yelled.

naturalist someone interested in studying the natural world
Charles Darwin was a famous naturalist who developed the theory of evolution.

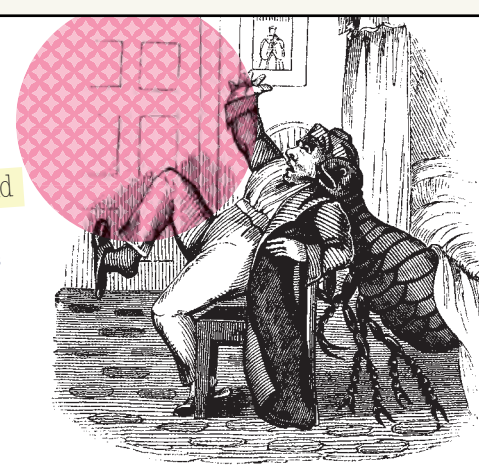
FLEAS TO MEET YOU

By Frank Buckland

In the month of July 1856, I discovered an individual who for twenty years had devoted his life to the intellectual training of fleas ...

A flea cannot be taken up from its wild state and made to work at once; like a colt or puppy, it must undergo a course of training and discipline. The training is brought about as follows. The flea is taken up gently, and a noose of the finest 'glass-silk' is passed round his neck, and there tied with a peculiar knot. The flea, unfortunately for himself, has a groove or depression between his neck and his body, which serves as a capital hold-fast for the bit of silk; it can slip neither up nor down, and he cannot push it off with his legs; he is a prisoner, and is thus tied to his work. This delicate operation is generally performed under a magnifying glass; but, after a time, the eye gets so accustomed to the work that the glass is not always used. In no way is the future performing flea mutilated; his kangaroo-like springing legs are not cut off, nor are his lobster-like walking legs interfered with—a flea must be in perfect health to perform well.

Every night each flea is taken out of his trappings, fed, and placed in a private compartment for the night; before they go to bed, they have their supper, and in the morning also their breakfasts; they take their meals from the hands of their owner—sometimes he has nearly all the fleas on the backs of his hands at the same moment, biting and sucking



away simultaneously. For more than twenty years he has thus daily fed his fleas without any detriment to his health; the quantity of blood each flea takes away being imperceptibly small—one drop of blood, he considers, would feed a flea for many weeks; but it is the itching sensation caused by the flea cutting the skin which is unpleasant. This feeling of irritation he felt painfully when he first began to submit himself to the tender mercies of his little performers; now he is so hardened that he feels them not at all, whether biting or sucking. When, however, there are many fleas on his hands at the same time, he suffers from a sensation of great irritation all over his body, which passes away when the supper is over. He has remarked that his fleas will not feed if his hand be not kept perfectly motionless; the act, therefore, of feeding and harnessing his company of performers is troublesome, and he is obliged to devote two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening to it.

Source: Frank Buckland, *Curious Men*, 1857



DO YOU KNOW...

Buckland's flea circus may have been real, but many flea circuses were tricks. People were conned into staring at tiny moving attractions supposedly being operated by fleas when in reality they were being moved by electrical or mechanical means such as magnets.

Life: Cultural contexts 11

FACT FILE

P.T. (Phineas Taylor) Barnum (1810–1891) was an American showman famous for his travelling circus and amazing exhibitions. He performed in front of Queen Victoria of England and the Russian Tsar (emperor). One of his most famous acts was General Tom Thumb, whom Barnum claimed was the smallest man alive, but who was actually a four-year-old dwarf!

Frank Buckland (1826–1880) was passionate about finding new ways to eat animals and established the Acclimatisation Society to popularise exotic meats.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Reading strategy

Students can reinforce their understanding of the extract 'Fleas to Meet You' by creating a flow chart of steps to show how a flea is trained. For example:

The flea is taken up gently

A noose is put around its neck

etc.

Assessment

Homework

Using the internet or your library, find at least one, but preferably two, really bizarre or interesting facts to share with the class. You could write up these facts and display them around the room.

FACT FILE

Fleas can jump up to 200 times their body length, making them one of the best jumpers in the animal kingdom. They typically live for two to three months and can survive up to a hundred days without eating. A female flea can consume up to sixteen times its body weight in blood every day!

VOCABULARY BUILDER

colt a young male horse

The colt had doubled in size since the last time Liam had seen it.

glass-silk thin glass fibres woven into a wool-like material

Today, glass-silk is often used in insulation and in making fibreglass.

depression a dip or sunken part

The water collected in the depression at the bottom of the hill.

capital great

'That's a capital idea!' replied Julie.

mutilated severely damaged

The surfer, although suffering a mutilated leg, was glad to have survived the shark attack.

trappings a harness, usually for a horse
The trainer carefully placed the ornamental trappings around the horse before heading for the parade.

detriment a disadvantage or loss

Sally could not find her English exercise book, to the detriment of her studies.

imperceptibly too small to be detected

The kitten imperceptibly stalked the unsuspecting mouse.

tender mercies ironically, to be treated cruelly or without mercy

Oliver feared the tender mercies of the orphanage director.

obliged duty-bound or forced

Michael was obliged to help his father wash the car.

Learning strategies

Focus in

MI: verbal-linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal

Discuss the term 'anthropomorphism', paying particular attention to its roots and etymology (Greek 'anthropos' meaning 'human' and 'morphe' meaning 'shape')—attributing human characteristics (especially motivations) to non-human entities such as animals or natural forces.

Have students look at the Buckland extract on the previous page. Ask: What evidence of anthropomorphism can you find in the extract? What effect would it have on the reader? Is it likely to increase its persuasiveness or not? Have them consider their own anthropomorphism with their pets. Ask: Do you think your dog, cat, rabbit or bird thinks and feels as you do?

EAL/D SUPPORT

Scaffolding task

Breakaway task 7b requires students to have an understanding of informative writing. The tips below may be useful for EAL/D students:

Informative writing must:

- include facts and data
- answer the who, what, where, when, why and how of a topic
- use interesting language so that it is not boring
- teach the reader something.

BREAKAWAY TASKS: ANSWERS

Go to page 258.

WEBLINKS

Visit the web destinations at **Pearson Reader** to investigate the British Library's collection of freak show posters. What do these posters tend to focus on? Would people still be interested in these things today?



Web Destination

PEARSON english A.B.

Visit the 'Grammar glossary' in the English Place at **Pearson Reader** web destinations for more information on quotation marks, or refer to Unit 22 of the Year 7 activity book for detailed activities.



Web Destination

Breakaway tasks

Remembering

- 1 How many hours a day must the man devote to feeding his fleas?
- 2 What task is generally performed under a magnifying glass?



Use **quotation marks** to enclose a phrase or sentence you have copied from a text to indicate that it is a quote, and to distinguish it from your own words.

Understanding

- 3 The following words come from the extract and might be new to you: accustomed, depression, capital, mutilated, trappings, detrimed and obliged. Consider each word in context to guess what you think it might mean. Then copy the table and complete it for each word.
 - In the second column, quote the phrase or sentence from the extract that contains the new word.
 - In the third column, explain the thinking process that helped you to work out the definition.
 - In the last column, write your definition. The first one has been done for you.

New word	New word in context	Clues	Your definition
Accustomed	'after a time, the eye gets so accustomed to the work that the glass is not always used'	The paragraph is about tying a noose around the fleas to train them. As they are so small, a magnifying glass is used. After a while, though, something happens to the eyes and the magnifying glass doesn't have to be used any more.	Accustomed: to get used to something

Applying

- 4 How hard do you think it would be to tie a piece of silk thread around the neck of a flea? Using an ordinary dressmaking pin and some cotton thread, see if you can tie a knot around your pin, just under the head. Race your classmates to see who can do it the fastest. When you have mastered it, race each other to see how many times you can harness your pin in a minute.

Analysing

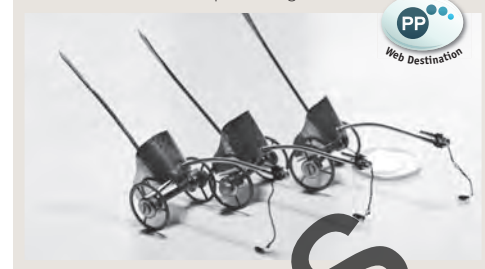
- 5 Frank Buckland was writing in the Victorian era—over 100 years ago. Language use changes over time, which is why some of Buckland's sentences might sound a bit strange. Choose three sentences or phrases from the extract that sound a bit odd to you and write them down. Next to each one, explain why it sounds strange and then rewrite it in language that is common today. Share your list with a partner.

Evaluating

- 6 Do you think it's possible to train a flea to be a circus performer? Justify your answer.
- 7 a How effective is Buckland's text in persuading you that there really is such a thing as a flea circus? Look at the 'Did you know?' on the next page, and go to the web destinations. Do you think the artist, Maria Cardoso, was tricking her audience, or do you think she really used fleas? Of these two texts, which is the more persuasive to you? Why?
 - b So, are flea circuses real or not? Conduct research to establish the truth about flea circuses. Then re-read the Buckland extract. Do you think that Buckland meant to document a real-life situation or is this extract a parody (an imitation or send-up) of a piece of informative writing? In your answer, include the features of informative writing that you identify in the text.

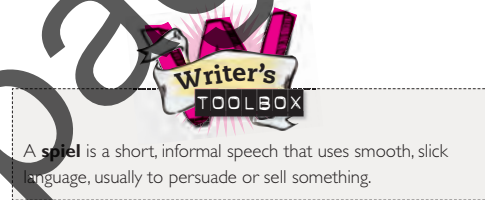
? DID YOU KNOW...

Artist Maria Cardoso spent five years researching and training fleas before creating the Cardoso Flea Circus. Her circus has been exhibited as a work of contemporary art in many art galleries around the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. Go to the web destinations to find a video of Cardoso's performing fleas.



Creating

- 8 Roll up! Roll up! Imagine that you are the ringmaster of the world's greatest flea circus. It is your job to give the opening spiel, a spiel that will build excitement in the audience, introduce the performers and get the show started. Write your script and then perform it for the class.



A **spiel** is a short, informal speech that uses smooth, slick language, usually to persuade or sell something.

Your spiel should:

- welcome your audience to the show
- let them know how amazing they will find it
- tell them what sorts of acts they will see
- introduce the performers.

Circus performers usually have clever or exciting stage names that give the audience an indication of what their act might be. Keep in mind that your performers are fleas when you make up creative and exciting stage names for them. For example: Superflea! Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound! Faster than a speeding dog!

A lion called Christian

Have you ever dreamt of owning an exotic pet—a grizzly bear, a giraffe, or a monkey perhaps? It might seem impossible to us now, not to mention unfair to the animal, but before the Endangered Species Act was passed in the United Kingdom in 1973, ordinary people could buy wild and exotic pets from Harrods, a famous department store in London. And that's exactly what two young Australian men did in 1969. Anthony 'Ace' Bourke and John Rendall bought a lion cub, which they called Christian.

Ace and John raised Christian in a basement apartment and furniture shop in Chelsea, London, until he was about one year old. By this time he was far too big to keep in the suburbs of London. They were lucky enough to be able to fly him to Kenya where he was rehabilitated into the wild by George Adamson, a man passionate about lions.

In 1971, Ace and John wrote a book about their experiences of raising a lion cub in London—and that might have been the end of the story, if it were not for YouTube. Late in 2007, Ace and John were told that a clip featuring their reunion with Christian, one year after he had been let loose in the wild, had been posted on YouTube. By 2008, the clip had received millions of hits and a whole new generation was learning about this curious and remarkable story.

The interest generated from the clip on YouTube prompted Ace and John to update their original book, and a new version was published in 2009. The following extract (from the original version) describes their daily life with the young, energetic and mischievous lion cub. 'Sophistocat' was the name of the furniture shop where Ace, John and Christian lived.



FACT FILE

Bourke and Rendall paid 250 guineas for Christian, which is the equivalent of about \$6000 in today's money.

Anthony Bourke (1946–) was born in Sydney before moving to London after completing his studies. He is an expert in Aboriginal art and now lives in his hometown—with two pet cats!

QUICK 5

Discuss appropriate search terms for an investigation into the exotic pet trade. Conduct an internet search for animal protection groups and government agencies that work to protect animals from exploitation.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Scaffolding task

Allow EAL/D students extra practice time prior to them performing their script to the class for **Breakaway task 8**. EAL/D students will be more successful in vocalising the correct language if they are prepared and confident leading up to the presentation.

? DID YOU KNOW...

Go to the web destinations to find the clip of Christian the lion.



Web Destination

Homework

Use the internet or the school library to research at least one, but preferably two, really amazing animal stories to share with the class. The stories could be about reunions, animals seeking out their owners, or animal bravery or intelligence.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

deficiency a shortage, lack

There was a deficiency of vaccine needed to combat the new strain of flu.

preconceptions ideas or beliefs held before an investigation of facts

Gary's preconceptions about Australian history were challenged by his research for a school assignment.

fallacy a mistaken belief based on false reasoning

It is a fallacy that the Sun revolves around the Earth.

inexhaustibly to act without losing energy

The baby cried inexhaustibly, much to the frustration of her older brother.

obscuring hiding, concealing

The column was obscuring the view of the stage.

incessantly without pause

The blowfly buzzed incessantly as Daniel tried to concentrate on his work.

manoeuvre to move, position

The driver was careful to manoeuvre the car between the two poles.

nonchalantly without concern or worry

Adam nonchalantly kicked the older boys' ball over the fence, with unexpected consequences.

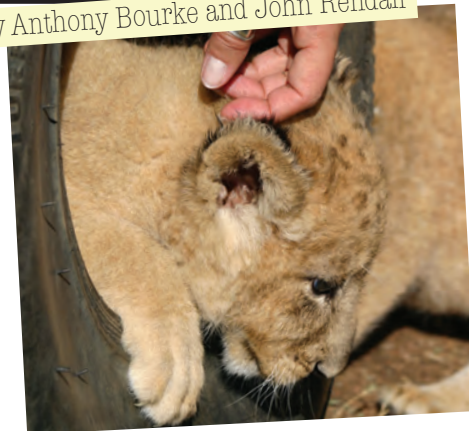
A LION CALLED CHRISTIAN

By Anthony Bourke and John Rendall

Two main meals, given to him late in the morning and in the early evening, consisted of three-quarters of a pound of raw meat, a raw egg and a spoonful of bone meal to prevent a calcium deficiency. We varied the meat and occasionally gave him an unskinned rabbit. Christian always carried the skin around Sophistocat for several days until it finally disintegrated or the smell became too overwhelming. He enjoyed having huge bones to play with and gnaw, and as there was no competition from other animals, we could safely handle his food as he ate.

We were to find that people's preconceptions about lions were often wrong. For example, it is a fallacy that it is dangerous to give an animal such as a lion raw meat because it supposedly will turn them into 'man-eaters'. We rather enviously eyed the delicious fillet steaks that a French chef sometimes brought in for Christian. The chef loved lions and of course had access to plentiful supplies of meat. The quantity of meat Christian required increased weekly, and he became so expensive to feed that we regretted not being able to turn him into a vegetarian!

He was inexhaustibly playful and had a variety of toys and rubber balls scattered all over the shop and the basement. Wastepaper baskets were a great favourite, first to be worn on the head, totally obscuring his sight, and then to be ripped apart. We had to buy him hardy toys, for the average life of a normal teddy bear was about two minutes. He demanded our constant attention and it was impossible to ignore him. If one of us was reading a newspaper, or on the telephone, Christian would immediately climb up on his lap. Sophistocat was a jungle of furniture, and he incessantly stalked us through it, becoming expert at creating games. He knew we would not allow him to jump on us, but he would cleverly manoeuvre himself into position behind a piece of furniture, so that it appeared as if we were in fact temptingly hiding from him. Then with a clear conscience he would charge and leap at us. We developed a habit of glancing nervously over our shoulders. If we caught him frozen in a crouched position with



intent mischievous eyes, he would nonchalantly pretend to clean his paws, rather irritated that his fun had been spoiled, for the game was to stalk and catch us unawares. Very quickly we could usually predict what his intentions were from the expression in his eyes. He was always entertaining and amusing, but very exhausting and demanding.

Source: Anthony Bourke and John Rendall, *A Lion Called Christian*, Random House, 1971



Non-fiction writing commonly contains a mix of facts, observations, thoughts, feelings and anecdotes (short, usually amusing stories about particular incidents). For example:
 Fact: "...it is a fallacy that it is dangerous to give an animal such as a lion raw meat because it supposedly will turn them into 'man-eaters'".
 Observation: "We had to buy him hardy toys, for the average life of a normal teddy bear was about two minutes."
 Thoughts and feelings: "He was always entertaining and amusing, but very exhausting and demanding."
 Anecdote: "Christian always carried the skin around Sophistocat for several days until it finally disintegrated or the smell became too overwhelming."

Breakaway tasks

Remembering

- 1 What did Ace and John regret and why?
- 2 Christian had two uses for wastepaper baskets. What were they?

Understanding

- 3 When was Christian able to charge and leap at Ace and John with a clear conscience?
- 4 List five adjectives that you think best describe Christian.

Applying

- 5 a In this extract, Ace and John say 'We were to find that people's preconceptions about lions were often wrong.' What preconceptions do you and your classmates have about lions?
 b Could you keep a lion in your own house?

Analysing

- 6 What is apt about the name of the furniture shop where Christian was raised?
- 7 This extract contains many adverbs. List ten adverbs you can find in the extract and, next to the adverb, write which word they are adding extra detail to. For example:
 Safely adds extra detail to the verb 'handle'.

Adverbs are words that add extra information to verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They give us more detail. For example:

She talked loudly.

'Loudly' is an adverb and tells us the volume of her talking. It gives us extra information about the verb 'talked'. If 'very' is added to the sentence, there will now be two adverbs in the sentence. For example:

She talked very loudly.

'Very' gives extra detail about the adverb 'loudly'.
 Hint: Adverbs often end in 'ly'.

- 8 What is implied about natural lion behaviour in the following: "...as there was no competition from other animals, we could safely handle his food as he ate?"

Evaluating

- 9 Using the information from the extract as a starting point, try to imagine the reality of keeping a lion cub as a pet. Copy and complete the table below, listing as many advantages and disadvantages of owning a lion cub as you can think of.

Owning a lion cub

Advantages	Disadvantages

- 10 Consider your list of advantages and disadvantages and make a decision about whether or not you would have bought Christian. Explain your answer.
- 11 Siegfried and Roy were two entertainers who had a white tiger as part of their Las Vegas act. Conduct some research into the show. Write a letter to the Las Vegas Mirage Hotel arguing whether or not they should have allowed the tiger, Montecore, to be part of the act.

Creating

- 12 Imagine that you have bought a wild and exotic animal as a pet. It might be a gorilla, a hippopotamus, a wallaby—any animal you like. Write an extract about what life is like with your exotic pet. Include at least three paragraphs covering:
 - your pet's eating habits
 - common misconceptions about your animal
 - how you keep your pet entertained.
- 13 Imagine you have brought your wild and exotic pet home only to discover that you must get a permit from your local council to be able to keep it. Write a letter to the council, persuading them to allow you to keep your pet. Make sure you tell them all the plans you have made to feed your pet, and to entertain and generally care for it. This will be a formal letter, so remember to set it out properly.



VOCABULARY BUILDER

apt appropriate, suitable

The student's response was not considered apt by her teacher.

implied stated indirectly

Jenny said that everything was OK, but her face implied that she was actually very angry.

HELPFUL HINTS

Breakaway task 13—A formal tone is necessary when you want to establish your credibility in an important situation. Avoid using slang terms and contractions (i.e. use 'it is' rather than 'it's'), use a properly planned structure and address the reader formally (i.e. Ms Smith, Councillor Jones).

An appropriate structure for this letter would be as follows:

- Paragraph 1—a short summary of the issue
- Paragraph 2—the actions you plan to take to keep the animal safely
- Paragraph 3—a persuasive argument about why you should be allowed to keep the animal.

EAL/D SUPPORT

Vocabulary assistance

If **Breakaway task 7** is too difficult for EAL/D students, a scaffolded task could be to provide these students with ten adverbs from the extract, and then ask them to find and highlight these so that they can complete the rest of the task as normal. Alternatively, if students are having limited success with this task, they may find it easier to look for and identify the verbs and adjectives in the extract first, and can then look to see if an adverb ending in -ly is linked to any of these words.

PEARSON english A.B. & S.B.

Refer to the following activity book units and student book chapters for more information and activities on:

- adjectives—Units 8 and 9 (Year 7 activity book), Unit 6 (Year 8 activity book)
- adverbs—Units 10 and 11 (Year 8 activity book), Focus on language (Year 7 student book).

EAL/D SUPPORT

Reading strategy

After students have read the extract from *A Lion Called Christian*, ask them to reread the extract to find the things that Christian did that were normal lion behaviour, and the things he did that were not normal lion behaviour:

Normal behaviour	Abnormal behaviour

BREAKAWAY TASKS: ANSWERS

Go to pages 259–60.