



EPISODE 8: 1938: COLUM

English: teaching strategies

Unit focus: English

Year level: Years 3–6

The Australian curriculum: English

The national English curriculum is based on three interrelated strands:

Language: Knowing about the English language ...

Literature: Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature ...

Literacy: Growing a repertoire of English usage ...

Reproduced with permission of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) from *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English*, 2009, p. 6, http://www.acara.edu.au/news_media/publications.html. Further information, including any updates, is available at <http://www.acara.edu.au>

EPISODE CLIP: THE DOLE INSPECTOR

ACTIVITY 1: HARDSHIP

Subthemes: Culture; Historical events; Social order and education

Discover

- Following a screening of the clip, ask the class to list the main events which occur in this story, identifying the key characters and the story focus.
- Use the following questions as prompts for further class or group discussion:
 - 1 What are the main difficulties for Colum's family and for his friends?
 - 2 What is the meaning of the term 'dole'?
 - 3 Why do you think Colum's family are on the dole?
 - 4 Why are these families raising chickens and growing vegetables in their backyards? What benefits would this have for them?
 - 5 What would happen to people on the dole if they were caught raising 'chooks'? Why?
 - 6 Do you think it is fair to stop a family's dole payments for doing this?

Reflect

- Ask students to find out what resources are available for unemployed people and families today, for example, Centrelink and unemployment benefits. Compare this with the situation of Colum's family in 1938. Ask students to write a report outlining which system they think is fairer and the reasons why.
- Discuss ways in which students might be able to help save money or contribute to the household if things were tough for their family. Brainstorm a class list of ideas. Have students write a letter to their family outlining what contributions they could make to help the family in a time of economic need.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.1: Tough times

ACTIVITY 2: FAMILY

Subthemes: Chores, business and employment; Social order and education

Discover

- Ask students to think about Colum and his family and then write a description of the family using three rich adjectives to create a word picture. Share and compare these descriptions and have students give reasons why they have described the family in this way. Encourage them to use evidence from the clip to support their opinion. Discuss the ways the filmmaker communicates important information about the family and their friends to the audience. Look closely at costumes, actions and the setting.



- Discuss how Colum's family works together in this time of hardship, identifying specific examples in the clip. Introduce the old saying that 'blood is thicker than water' and discuss what this might mean, and what it means in this context.

Reflect

- Students work in small groups to build up a richer picture of the family and their situation from all the information collected. Students can write a short story about what happened to Colum and his family before this situation, and how hardship has brought them together.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.2: Sticking together

ACTIVITY 3: DOLE INSPECTOR'S COMING

Subthemes: Chores, business and employment; Social order and education

Discover

- As a class, discuss the role of the dole inspector. Ask students to focus on this character very carefully, taking notes and collecting as much information about him as possible from what is shown and heard in the clip. Look at how he dresses, how he acts and how he speaks. Have students compare notes and then individually write a detailed description of the dole inspector from the information they have collected.
- As a class, briefly discuss these responses and have students give reasons why they think the dole inspector is doing this job. Part of the discussion may focus on the fact that his job may be all that stands between the dole inspector and being unemployed and on the dole, like Colum's family.

Reflect

- Ask students to create a webpage for the dole inspector. Ask them to imagine that he is alive today and needs a Facebook page to connect with other dole inspectors across the country. Alternatively, design an advertisement asking people to apply for the job of a dole inspector.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.3: What a job!

ACTIVITY 4: RHYMING SLANG

Subtheme: Language and scripting

Discover

- The Australian language is notorious for using rhyming slang to evoke a more colourful and humorous connection to the meaning of a word or phrase. As an example, Colum's family call the dole inspector, Mr Geraghty, 'Mr Blake' which is a play on words for 'Joe Blake' or 'snake'. Discuss why Colum's family would imply he was a 'snake'.



- Discuss the tradition of rhyming slang, one that is still embedded in Australian culture, and ask students to find out more about it. Where did rhyming slang originate? Ask students to find other phrases such as 'China plate' (mate), 'meat pies' (eyes).

Reflect

- Ask students to find at least five different examples of rhyming slang that they can contribute to a class list. Identify key features of rhyming slang to create a guide for making up new rhyming slang. Ask students to use this as a model to write their own rhyming slang for a selection of terms commonly used today. Ask students to develop two new rhyming slang expressions and illustrate them with words and pictures.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.4: Talking in code

EPISODE CLIP: THE SHADOW

ACTIVITY 5: WORKING FOR A LIVING

Subthemes: Chores, business and employment; Language and scripting; Relationships

Discover

- Discuss with the class the situation in the clip where Colum and Thommo earn some extra cash working for the shopkeeper Mr O'Sullivan. Discuss the work of Mr O'Sullivan (the shopkeeper and SP bookmaker) and what students think is involved in his work and his attitude towards it. Discuss the fact that SP bookies were illegal and consider what this might mean for the involvement of the two boys.
- Have students create a list of the tasks the boys had to do. Have students consider the reasons why they think Colum and Thommo were doing this job. What might have been the risks? Discuss why they were willing to take such risks.
- Revisit the clip where the two boys run down the lane on their return from collecting bets and bump into the policeman. Ask students to identify and discuss the possible ramifications for the boys from this encounter. What the boys are doing is illegal and they are truanting from school.
- Students work in small groups to devise ideas for ways in which children can earn money today that are safe and legal.

Reflect

- Ask students to think about how they would feel if they were in this situation and were caught by the policeman. Have students draw this scene as a three-frame comic strip. They should draw the boys, using facial expressions and action, with thought captions to show their feelings as the situation unfolds, for example, 'Oh no, this can't be happening? Will he tell mum?'

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.5: Not strictly legal

ACTIVITY 6: MONEY FOR JAM

Subthemes: Currency; Language and scripting; Relationships

Discover

- Discuss what the audience learns about the currency used in 1938 through watching this clip. Ask students to note all the information they can about money, and what messages the clip conveys about it. Look closely for clues in the dialogue and action. Have students name the coins and the slang used for money, for example, what does 'a couple of bob' mean? Ask students to find out what a bob is worth today.
- Invite students to interview older people, for example grandparents, to see what they can find out about money before decimal currency. Have students research pre-decimal money to find out why the names 'shilling', 'bob', 'sixpence' and so on were used.

Reflect

- Encourage students to find examples of old currency to bring to class and compare with today's coins. Have students research the comparative value of the old currency and today's money. They should list the prices of everyday items (for example, milk, a newspaper, lollies, a loaf of bread) today and in 1938.
- Ask students to create two newspaper advertisements for a basic commodity. The first advertisement should be designed to be published in 1938 and the second design should be for a newspaper publication today.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.6: A couple of bob

ACTIVITY 7: RADIO

Subthemes: Chores, business and employment; Entertainment and games; Inventions and electronic media

Discover

- As a class, discuss the role of the radio in this clip. Ask students what they think the radio symbolises. Why is the radio in Miss Miller's window? The positioning of the radio is evidence of the circumstances of the listeners in the street, including Colum and his family. What does this tell the audience about Miss Miller? She is obviously wealthier than her neighbours but she is also thoughtful and generous because she is sharing her radio with them.
- As a class, discuss the availability of radios at this time and their accessibility to the general public.

Reflect

- Ask students to undertake library and internet research on the history of radio technology and how it impacted on family and community life in the 1930s. They should present this information as an oral report to the class.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.7: Radio times

ACTIVITY 8: COMIC BOOKS

Subthemes: Art, music and literature; Entertainment and games

Discover

- The boys were seen reading the comic book *The Shadow*. As a class, discuss why comics may have been so popular at this time. Have students find out more about other comics which were popular in Australia in the 1930s. Students can also find out which comics from today were around in the 1930s.
- Discuss the role of this comic book in the story. Have students discuss:
 - 1 What does this contribute to the story?
 - 2 How is Colum affected by the notion of a being a hero and helping his friend who is in need?

Reflect

- Ask students to create the front cover for a comic book about a new hero whose goal is to help his or her friends in need. This process includes naming the hero, thinking of talents and super powers, designing an appropriate costume, and creating a slogan such as Superman's 'Faster than a speeding bullet ...'
- For further work on super heroes and comic book characters, see activities for Legacy of the Silver Shadow at http://www.actf.com.au/learning_centre/title_pages/lss_tp.php

EPISODE CLIP: PUNTING

ACTIVITY 9: THE MELBOURNE CUP

Subthemes: Historical events; Language and scripting

Discover

- As a class, discuss the way this episode is set at the time of the running of the 1938 Melbourne Cup. Brainstorm what the class knows about the Melbourne Cup and discuss why it is called 'The race that stops a nation'. List all the facts and ideas that come forward.
- As a class, revisit the list and divide it into either 'for' (positive) or 'against' (negative): what is good about the Melbourne Cup and what is bad about it?

Reflect

- Ask students to select a side in the debate and develop their argument for or against. Once the students have completed a 1–2 minute persuasive text, organise a class debate/s on the topics 'Horse racing should be banned' or 'The Melbourne Cup is harmless fun'.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.8: The great debate

ACTIVITY 10: WRITING A NEWSPAPER REPORT

Subtheme: Customs and traditions

Discover

- Ask students to bring some examples of horse racing reports from the sports section of a newspaper. Deconstruct the texts with the class, looking at the structure of this text type or genre, the style of writing and the sort of information included.
- Source an old newspaper report about the Melbourne Cup, either online or from the library, which includes descriptions of the horses and of the fashions. Deconstruct this text with the class and use the information to create an outline of the features of this text type. Use this model to create a jointly constructed newspaper report of a mythical horse race.

Reflect

- Ask students to write their own newspaper report on the 1938 Melbourne Cup, using information from old newspaper reports, books or online. They should include the names of the horses, the jockey's colours, the owners, events on the day and of course, fashion. What were women and men wearing?

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.9: It's a winner!

ACTIVITY 11: SAYINGS AND PUNISHMENT

Subthemes: Customs and traditions; Language and scripting

Discover

- As a class, look at some of the colloquial expression or 'sayings' used in this clip, for example, a 'grandfather of a hiding'. Read the script for Episode 8: 1938: Colum to find other examples. Discuss the meaning of these.

Reflect

- Ask students to discuss the concept of 'corporal' punishment. What is the origin of this term and what is involved in corporal punishment? Ask students to jot down other terms that mean the same as 'a hiding'. As a class, evaluate if 'a grandfather of a hiding' is better or worse than another sort of hiding. Ask students, 'Do you think people still view corporal punishment today as they did in 1938? Why or why not?'



- Another saying used is 'Not a word to your mother.' Ask students to discuss the context in which this is used and what it means. Have students think of sayings of a similar nature, such as 'Mum's the word.', 'Keep it under your hat.', 'Don't tell a living soul.' and 'Sit on it.'
- Ask students to create an ongoing 'sayings' file where they list the phrases with their meanings. Students could read through the *My Place* scripts to find examples more quickly.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E8.10: Ways of saying

Aligned resources

Australian Children's Television Foundation, 'Legacy of the Silver Shadow',

http://www.actf.com.au/learning_centre/title_pages/lss_tp.php

Australian Children's Television Foundation, 'Live Action: Lighting and Sound',

http://www.actf.com.au/learning_centre/school_resources/teaching_kits/lia/units/lia_tk_light_snd.htm

Australian Screen, 'It's Ruth, 1994: Lux Radio Theatre', <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/its-ruth/clip2>



Tough times

1 What are the main difficulties for Colum's family and for his friends?

2 Why do you think Colum's family is on the dole?

3 Why are these families raising chickens and growing vegetables in their backyards?

4 What benefits would this have for them?

5 What would happen to people on the dole if they were caught raising 'chooks'? Why?

6 Do you think it is fair to stop a family's dole payments for doing this?



Sticking together

- 1 Write a description of Colum's family using three rich adjectives to create a word picture. Provide evidence from the clip to support your opinion.

- 2 How does the filmmaker communicate important information about Colum's family and their friends to the audience?

- 3 Write a short story about what happened to Colum and his family before this situation, and how hardship has brought them together.



What a job!

- 1 What is the role of the dole inspector? Identify aspects of what he does, who he is and what he looks like.

- 2 Select either of these activities:

- a Create a webpage for the dole inspector. Imagine that he is alive today and needs a Facebook or MySpace page to connect with other dole inspectors across the country.
- b Design an advertisement asking people to apply for the job of dole inspector.



Talking in code

- 1 Rhyming slang is embedded in Australian culture. Where did it originate?

- 2 Find five examples of rhyming slang.

Rhyming slang	Meaning
China plate	mate
meat pies	eyes

- 3 Develop two new rhyming slang expressions and illustrate them in words and pictures.

Rhyming slang	Meaning



Not strictly legal

- 1 Create a list of the tasks that Colum and Thommo had to complete for the shopkeeper Mr O'Sullivan.

- 2 Why were Colum and Thommo doing this job? What were the risks?

- 3 What ways can children earn money today that are safe and legal?

- 4 Draw the scene with the policeman as a three-frame comic strip using facial expressions and action. Add thought captions to show the boy's feelings as the situation unfolds, for example, 'Oh no, this can't be happening? Will he tell mum?'

--	--	--



A couple of bob

- 1 Find out as much information you can about pre-decimal money and the names of coins and notes. Identify any slang terms, for example, 'a couple of bob' which means 'a few shillings'.

Imperial currency	Slang terms	Decimal value
halfpenny		
penny		
shilling		
guinea		
pound		
sovereign		

- 2 Equate the value of everyday items in 1938 to the price of these commodities today.

Commodity	1938 prices	Today's prices
bread		
butter		
newspapers		
lollies		
milk		
Soap		

- 3 Create two newspaper advertisements for the same basic commodity. The first advertisement should be designed to be published in 1938 and the second design should be for a newspaper publication today.

--	--



Radio times

Collect information about the history of radio technology and how it impacted on family and community life in the 1930s. Conduct your research using the library and the internet. Present the information as an oral report to the class.



The great debate

Select a side in the debate and develop your argument 'for' or 'against'. You will present this argument in a one to two minute speech as part of the class debate. The topics are:

- 1 Horse racing should be banned.
- 2 The Melbourne Cup is harmless fun.



Ways of saying

1 What is the meaning of 'corporal' punishment? What is the origin of this term?

2 Do you think people still view corporal punishment today as they did in 1938? Why or why not?

3 Find other sayings and what they mean. Look at *My Place* scripts or note down expressions you have heard.

Sayings	Meanings
grandfather of a hiding	
Not a word to your mother.	
Don't tell a living soul.	
Mum's the word.	
Keep it under your hat.	