MACQUARIE PEN ANTHOLOGY of AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

TEACHING GUIDE

About the Teaching Guide

www.macquariepenanthology.com.au

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About the *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature*

The Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature is an authoritative and comprehensive survey of Australian literary writing, from 1788 to the present. It gathers some of the best, most distinctive, most significant writing to come from this country. Over 1500 pages, it offers a systematic survey of Australian writing in English in a range of genres including fiction, poetry, drama, colonial letters, speeches, and essays.

About this Teaching Guide

The Teaching Guide is designed to accompany the *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature*. It comprises ten separate units framed around concepts that focus on a range of themes, ideas and issues, for lower, middle and upper secondary English students. It is supplemented by a collection of related film clips and is downloadable from www.macquariepenanthology.com

Contributors to the Guide

Project managers for the Teaching Guide for the *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature* are Associate Professor Donna Gibbs and Dr Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, NSW.

They have been assisted by: Associate Professor Catherine Beavis, Don Carter, Ellen Connolly, Dr Anita Heiss, Mark Howie, Mike Jenkins, Dr Wendy Morgan, Associate Professor Marnie O'Neill, Karren Philp, Juliet Paine, Di Schriever, Joan Slattery, John Watson, Marion G. White and many others.

Those who contributed significantly to the writing of the online units include: Marina Foster, Fran Knight, Margaret McClintock, Rosie McKellar, Anita O'Brien, Karen Yager and Andrea Wilson.

The Teaching Guide units

<u>Lower to Middle Secondary</u>

Unit 1: Icons

Unit 2: Make 'em Laugh, Make 'em Cry

Unit 3: Aboriginal Perspectives

Unit 4: Text into Film I

<u>Middle to Upper Secondary</u>

Unit 5: Landscapes/Mindscapes

Unit 6: Family Dramas

Unit 7: Text into Film II

Unit 8: From the Outside

<u>Upper Secondary</u>

Unit 9: Voices

Unit 10: Writers at Play

Using the Teaching Guide units

The units provided here have been constructed on a common template by teachers from different locations across Australia. Although each state and territory favours a particular vocabulary and range of outcomes in their syllabuses, they have much that is common in their approaches to teaching English. The language used in these units is intended to be accessible to everyone and to be adapted easily for classroom use. Each unit offers a focus statement, key texts from the Anthology, an introduction, and a series of learning and teaching activities.

All the units have been designed to encompass reading, writing, talking, listening and viewing activities and draw on the use of technologies and web links where appropriate. Individual, pair, group work and whole class activities, as well as suggestions for extension work, are included. The student handouts that accompany the activities are provided in printable format.

The design of the units allows teachers to take a flexible approach to their use. It is possible, for example, to teach a unit as it stands, or alternatively, to select one or more sets of activities for study from a unit. Teachers are encouraged to refer to their own curriculum documents to select appropriate aims and outcomes for the work they choose for their students.

What place has Australian Literature in English curricula?

As one of the great literatures of the world, Australian literature has its place in the educational curricula of countries across the globe. In Australia itself, however, recognition of the importance of its own literature has been slow in coming. Until well after the middle of the 20th century, Australian literature was seen as the very poor cousin of English literature and barely appeared on text lists. By the 1970s and 1980s the proportion of Australian writers increased to about a third in most state syllabuses, and at

the time of publication of the *Anthology* (2009), the representation of Australian writers, including Aboriginal writers, has been further increased.

Yet the classroom reality is probably rather different. Prescribed lists leave plenty of room for choice and teachers are often under no obligation to choose texts that are Australian over other texts. Research suggests many teachers tend to choose texts they have taught before, rather than new additions to a list. Further, prescribed text lists are generally only applied to senior schooling and teachers often make their own choices in the junior years. For many reasons then, it seems that Australian literature has often been under represented in Australian classrooms.

The proposed National Curriculum, currently in development, acknowledges the significant role that Australian literature and its traditions have in the study of English, though particular texts will not be prescribed. It recommends that the presence of Australian literary works within the contexts of an understanding of both its heritage and world literature should be included. It recognises the importance of Australia's geographic location and the nature of our increasingly diverse population. A wide range of literary material from various traditions should be considered and explored within any study of Australia's language and literature.

How can educators use the *Anthology* in their teaching?

There are many different ways, limited only by the imagination of the user, that the Australian *Anthology* can be used in a classroom. Texts can be selected for study as stand alone examples of a writer's work, or alternatively may be linked with other texts in a variety of ways. These ways include studying a text or a selection of texts:

- from a similar historical context;
- concerned with a particular place;
- that have thematic/subject connections (eg: war, music, loneliness, childhood, sense of identity; urban life, the bush);
- that explore family or other relationships;
- that are from the same genre or across genres or those which are transformed from another genre;
- that are innovative and experimental in form or style;
- written by those who have some common experience (eg being male or female writers, immigrant writers, Aboriginal writers etc);
- that challenge or take a different standpoint from each other;
- that represent the variety of comic writing (wit, satire, parody etc); and
- that have 'affinities, oppositions, echoes or contrasts' with other texts; and so on.

While the Teaching Guide is designed specifically for secondary teachers and students, tertiary teachers will find useful questions and ideas within these units that could be used with their classes. The focus statements for each of the ten units along with the list of suggested texts provide ideas that could be adapted for discussion or assignment work at tertiary level.

Useful websites

www.austlit.edu.au/

AustLit is a non-profit collaboration between twelve Australian Universities and the National Library of Australia providing authoritative information on hundreds of thousands of creative and critical Australian literature works relating to more than 100,000 Australian authors and literary organisations. Its coverage spans 1780 to the present day. Access to this AustLit data is only available to subscribers but AustLit is freely available to patrons of all Australian state libraries, the National Library of Australia, almost all Australian university libraries and a number of local municipal libraries.

www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/adbonline.htm

Australian Dictionary of Biography online edition with over 10 000 scholarly biographies of persons of significance in Australian history.

www.gutenberg.net.au/pgaus.html

The Project Gutenberg Library of Australiana has downloadable versions of out of copyright works by significant Australian writers. Includes full length novels by Rolf Boldrewood, Ada Cambridge, Tom Collins (Joseph Furphy), Miles Franklin, Mary Fortune, etc.

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/history_nation/terra_australis/journals/index.html

State Library collection of original First Fleet journals, letters and art works.

http://www.macquariepenanthology.com.au/abor-websites.html

Information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, books and other arts and cultural activities

www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/

Multicultural Australia offers resources on all aspects of life in Australia, including lesson ideas.

www.abc.net.au/rn/

ABC Radio National: variety of issues discussed and resources include podcasts available with interviews, readings, etc.

www.pictureaustralia.org/index.html

Provides a search of cultural institutions for Australian images. See pictures of Australia's past and present including: photographs, objects, maps and works of art.

www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/

Australian culture and recreation portal of federal government: wide range of resources including literature, history and culture.

www.australianscreen.com.au/

Range of film clips and other resources with educational interest about images of Australia; includes teachers' notes.

www.afc.gov.au/filmsandawards/recentfilms/tv.aspx

Screen Australia's website is a gateway to information about Australian films.

www.screensound.gov.au/

The National Film and Sound Archive is Australia's audiovisual archive, collecting, preserving and sharing this rich heritage.

www.abc.net.au/rn/poetica/

Radio National's *Poetica* program website focuses on national and international Australian poetry hosted by Mike Ladd. Students are able to listen to past programs that often feature poets reading their own work.

www.trust.com.au/awards/miles_franklin/

The website for the Miles Franklin Award, Australia's most prestigious literary award. It contains a useful list of past winners for students wishing to pursue a wider reading program focusing on major Australian literature.

www.educ.mq.edu.au/ee

This website, *e is for english*, is a customised Australian site for English teachers and provides links to many relevant materials to support the teaching of English. The links and details found under *The Literary World* section are of particular assistance.