model three

Writing to recount historical perspectives

Writing	Historical recount
Reading	*Aliens*
Language	Language for expressing ideas and interacting with others: noun groups (participants), vocabulary for conveying perspective
Supporting the student	Independent writing

Through the integration of English and History content, historical literature, whose primary purpose is to inform, can be used to engage with historical skills and concepts. In this teaching context, Year 5 and 6 students can investigate 'perspective and interpretations' (ACARA, 2012) when responding to a range of texts and composing their own.

When working with a particular group of students, in order to tap into their prior knowledge, the content focus was on 'First contacts'. The students had studied this topic in the previous year. Having background knowledge allowed for a close focus on language choices and critical thinking about how perspective is conveyed through sources within an historical field. The *Australian Curriculum: History* (ACARA, 2012) suggests that students should be involved in both examining a range of sources and in the construction of a range of texts stating, 'Historical texts typically include those that recount a sequence of events, present past events as a narrative, discuss concepts and ideas, and argue a point of view.'

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Exploration of sources, both primary and secondary, can include texts ranging from diaries and journals to historical literature and videos. Historical literature is a powerful tool for investigating historical concepts. The development of perspective in student writing can be based on engagement with and comparison of a range of texts about an historical event such as 'First contacts'. Suitable texts include:

Australians all by Nadia Wheatley and Ken Searle (2013)

The Rabbits by John Marsden and Shaun Tan (1998)

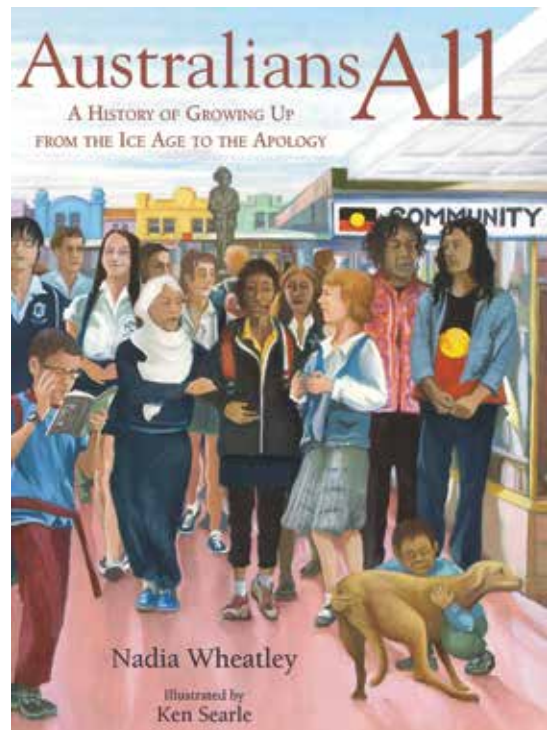*Nanberry: Black brother white* by Jackie French (2011)

My place website (2011)

David Collin's Journal (1798)

Surgeon John White's Journal (1797)

Watkin Tench's Journal (1788)

'The First Fleet and first contact with local inhabitants' (Skwirk Online, 2005).

Figure 1
Cover of *Australians all*

In this example an extract from *Australians all* (Wheatley and Searle, 2013, p. 55) is placed against a range of other texts with a focus on how participants are named by writers in order to construct a particular perspective on historical events. The cover of the book is displayed in Figure 1.

Knowledge about texts and language

Choices for using the extract from *Australians all* (2013, p. 55) have been based on close analysis of its features and those of other texts based on similar events. This analysis in Table 1 reveals the possibilities for investigating perspective.

Table 1 Analysis of features of text conveying perspective	
Context	*Australians all* by Nadia Wheatley and illustrated by Ken Searle, published in 2013, is a unique text in that it is a contemporary record of past events including the perspective of children in the form of mini-biographies. Wheatley (2013) points out that history books tend not to include the perspective of children. The accounts span from the time of the Ice Age to the Apology in 2008 and are based on historical research. When the selected text is placed beside other texts which record similar historical events it can be seen how history is problematic and influenced not only by the context of actual historical events but also by the context in which historical events are considered over the passing of time. By making particular language choices Nadia Wheatley attempts to capture the values, beliefs and perspectives surrounding historical events.
Social purpose/ genre	The social purpose of the text is complex. The text has narrative elements but merges historical events as well as persuasive elements to convey a particular interpretation of history. Texts can be categorised as imaginative, informative or persuasive. The primary purpose of this text is to inform, as it contains culturally important content thus being primarily informative. Such texts can include 'explanations and descriptions of natural phenomena, recounts of events, instructions and directions, rules and laws and news bulletins' (ACARA, 2012). Nadia Wheatley herself touches on the complexities of the purpose of the text in saying 'the reason I love history is because it is story' (2013, p. 253).

Field **(What is the** **subject matter?)**	The events in the chosen extract (Wheatley, 2013, p. 55) take place over a period of three days and are conveyed from the Indigenous perspective at the point of first contact with the British in 1788. The text is mainly action based with actions dominated by the British with the inclusion of some description. The participants in the text are clearly named from the perspective of the Indigenous community.
Tenor **(Who is involved** **and what is the** **relationship?)**	Based on the reader's world view and knowledge of past events, there may be different reactions to the text particularly in regards to how the British participants are described and named, eg, *the trespassers*. The reader is given a particular perspective of the events which often differs from other interpretations in both primary and secondary historical sources. The perspective is strengthened by the use of vocabulary to convey attitude, eg, *trespassers* (Humphrey, Droga & Feez, 2012) and the use of high modality, eg, *obviously*.
Mode **(What is the** **channel of** **communication?)**	In terms of the cohesive use of lexical items across the text, the reader needs to be able to track the participants by identifying the word chains (Derewianka, 2011) which serve to refer to the participants in a range of ways, eg, *more and more of the white devils, these aliens, one of the red coats.*
Text structure **and phases**	The text structure of the *Australians all* extract reflects a typical recount structure in which the reader is orientated to the situation in regards to the setting of time and place and introduced to the participants. In this case the naming of the participants provides the setting of the events, *the people of Botany Bay.* The next stage of the text is based on a sequence of events marked by reference to time, eg, *On the third morning.* Although the text is an extract, the concluding stage serves to provide a comment on the situation. The phases of the text reveal the recounting of events developed through problems with an attempted solution. In the final stage it is clear that the author is making a comment on the situation, a device often found in historical texts although not always obvious when embedded within events. (See annotated text in Table 2.)

Understanding features of a modelled text

The following analysis in Table 2 shows an extract from *Australians all* and the role of the noun group in naming participants in a variety of ways across the text. Often in the context of History the naming of participants reveals the perspective of the writer as an interpretation is conveyed about past events. Knowledge about such features assists students in critically analysing historical texts and also in composing their own texts. The following colour coding is used:

noun groups

Table 2 Analysis of text and language features		
Text structure	**Phases**	***Australians all* by Nadia Wheatley and Ken Searle (2013, p. 55)**
Orientation	Introduction of setting and participants	Over the next two days, the people of Botany Bay saw another ten ghost ships sail in from the horizon.
Sequence of events	Events/problems	They watched as more and more of the white devils began walking about on their homeland. Taking the water. Cutting the grass. Chopping down the trees
	Comment	These aliens obviously didn't have the slightest clue about the Law, or the right way to behave.
	Events/ attempted solution	Some of the men threw their spears, to let the trespassers know they were not welcome.
	Event	On the third morning, one of the redcoats made fire come out of a stick.
Comment	Comment on the overall situation	There was nothing to be done but wait patiently for the ghosts to go back into the clouds, as those other ones had done. Obviously they wouldn't stay here. This wasn't their country.

Focus on language for expressing ideas and interacting with others

Of significance in the extract from *Australians all* is the use of noun groups to name participants (human and non-human) across the text. Simultaneously they serve to name the participants involved in the actions whilst conveying a perspective about the nature of the participants. Comparison to other texts on similar events shows differences in such choices. When investigating the topic of 'first contact' the understanding of participants involved is critical to discussing perspectives and points of view.

By exploring the possibilities of the noun group we can start examining and questioning how participants are named in historical texts. Students can be given the potential elements of the noun group as a tool for looking at how to name, and as is often the case in History, how people are classified. This can be seen in these examples set out in Table 3.

| Table 3	Noun groups naming participants across different texts					
Text	**Noun groups to name participants**					
	Pointer/ determiner	**Describer**	**Classifier**	**Main noun**	**Adjectival/ prepositional phrase**	**Adjectival clause**
Australians all (Wheatley, 2013)	the			people	of Botany Bay	
	these			aliens		
'The First Fleet and first contact with local inhabitants' (Skwirk, 2005)	the		Indigenous	communities		who tried to resist these strangers to their land
	the	new		settlers		

Refer to Derewianka (2011) and Humphrey, Droga & Feez (2012) for further explanation of the noun group.

The *Australian Curriculum: English* in Year 5 identifies the following content which can be addressed based on teacher preparation and knowledge about the chosen texts and language.

Language	Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships (ACELA1501)
	Understand how noun groups/phrases and adjective groups/ phrases can be expanded in a variety of ways to provide a fuller description of the person, place, thing or idea (ACELA1508)
Literature	Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features on particular audiences (ACELT1795)
	Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts (ACELT1608)
Literacy	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1704)
	Reread and edit student's own and others' work using agreed criteria for text structures and language features (ACELY1705)

Supporting the learner

Based on teacher knowledge about a range of texts and language choices, the following teaching and learning sequence (Figure 2) outlines steps to support students in moving from responding to a range of texts on an historical context to composing their texts to capture the perspective of an historical context.
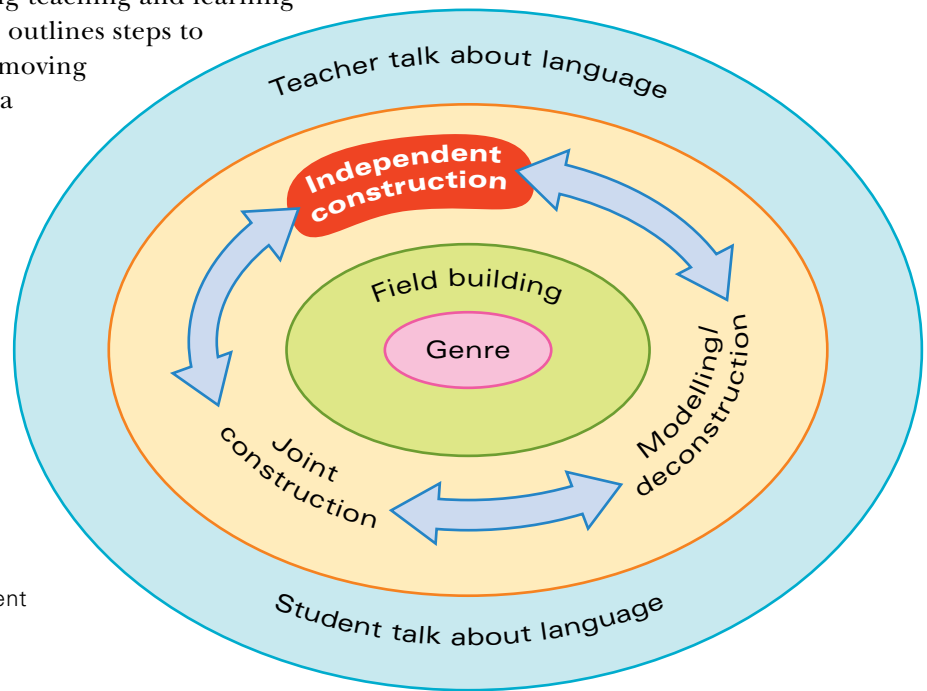
Figure 2

Adapted teaching and learning cycle with emphasis on independent construction

Teacher talk about language

Independent construction

Field building

Genre

Joint construction

Modelling/ deconstruction

Student talk about language

Spotlight on language for expressing ideas and interacting with others during independent writing

In this detailed example of independent construction, focus is placed on composing a text by drawing upon language developed throughout the teaching sequence, particularly through reading modelled texts. Through reading a range of texts students are equipped to make their language choices based on the historical context and the perspective they are wishing to convey to the reader.

Prior to writing discuss the 'Learning intentions and success criteria' set out in Table 4. This should be made familiar to students throughout the teaching cycle (See Figure 3). Sharing learning goals ensures students know what success looks like, making learning visible (Hattie, 2012) and also provides another avenue for sharing and developing metalanguage.

Figure 3 Making Learning intentions and Success criteria explicit throughout the whole teaching cycle

Table 4 Learning intentions and success criteria	
Learning intentions	**Success criteria**
to understand how perspective is developed in historical texts	to identify how participants are named in texts
	to compare the naming of participants across a range of texts
	to use knowledge of naming participants in our own writing

To plan for independent writing, students can re-watch the *My place* video 'First contact'. Students should have already watched the video earlier in the teaching sequence. Figure 4 shows a still from the video.

Figure 4
My place video 'First contact
Episode 24, 1788: *Dan*' (2011)

After viewing, students can record possible ways participants (Dan and Waruwi) may be named and described through noun group choice in order to show perspective (Table 5). By planning and revising earlier learning prior to writing, the table provides support even though students are writing independently.

Table 5 Naming participants to show perspective		
Participants	**Dan's perspective**	**Waruwi's perspective**
'the British (Dan)'	Sir the Governor the men who don't know my secret ignorant men cheering marines	the ghosts the invaders the intruders the thieves who stole my dog
'the dog'	the friendly dog Lapa Waruwi's dog girl victim captive animal	Lapa my dog
'the Indigenous people (Waruwi)'	my new friend the honest native girl Waruwi who was frustrating my disappointed and betrayed friend	me my family nana

Students can then decide on whether to write in first or third person and from either Dan or Waruwi's perspective. This choice is significant when considering the writer's interaction with the reader (Derewianka, 2011) and can be discussed in terms of which choice might best convey the intended perspective to the reader. Students should also be reminded of the 'Learning intentions and Success criteria' (Table 4) before they begin writing.

After writing students can underline the noun groups which name participants and highlight choices which particularly convey perspective to the audience. Students may also evaluate themselves using a strategy such as 'three stars and a wish' in regards to the Learning intentions and

Success criteria. This involves identifying three positive aspects of their writing and a wish which identifies an area for improvement. Evaluation of choices supports self-assessment with the annotation of the text being key to leading to the development of self-knowledge, through feedback to self and peers (Hattie & Yates, 2014).

As can be seen in examples of student work below, as part of the teaching sequence students were given a pre-assessment task in which they recounted events from the video 'First contact'.
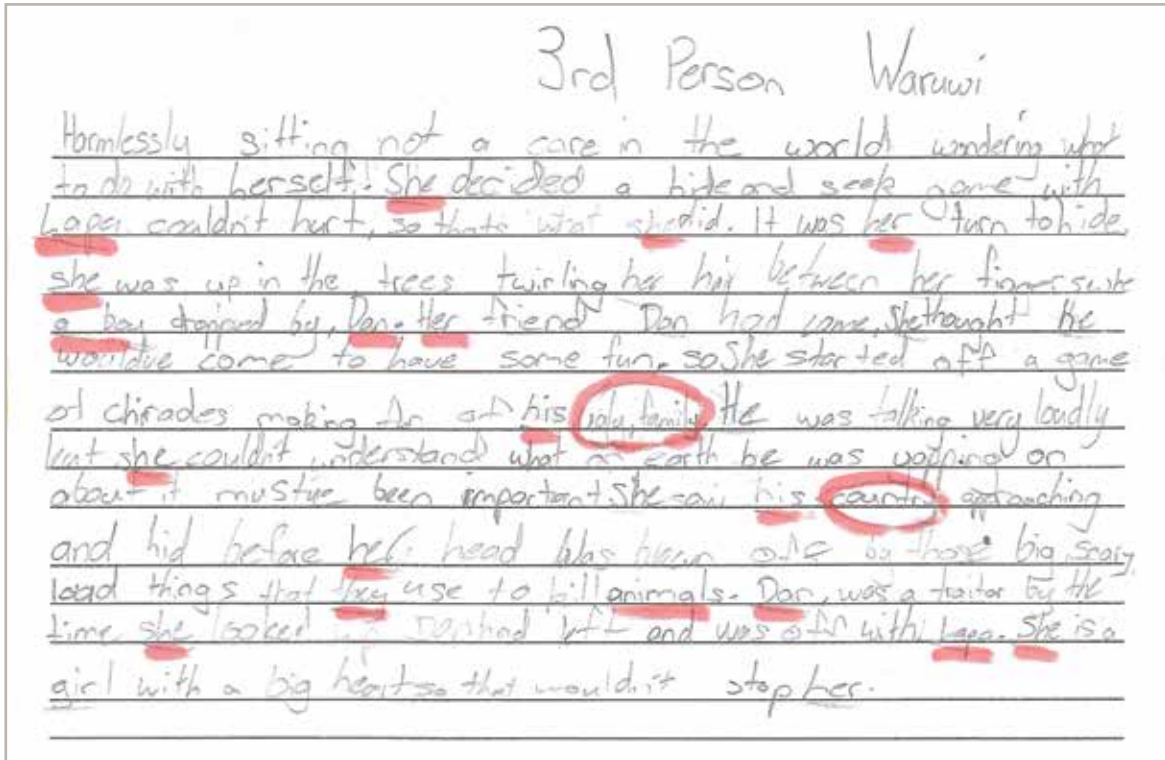
In both the examples (Figures 5 and 6) the student chose to write in the third person from the perspective of Waruwi. As can be seen in the identification of noun groups to name the participants the post-assessment shows a more appropriate use of noun groups to convey perspective based on a more developed understanding of the historical context. In the first text (Figure 5) the emphasis is on the actions such as game playing and the sudden outcome of Dan being a traitor and taking Waruwi's dog.

By using more deliberate choices in naming Dan in particular, in the second text (Figure 6) the emphasis shifts to Waruwi's perception of

Dan through the way he is named which shifts to the broader context of participants invading her land through the use of noun groups built around nouns such as 'invaders' and 'intruders'.

In the second example, the choices move the events into an historical rather than personal retelling of events, serving to convey a particular perspective of the situation. Choices can be seen in Table 5.
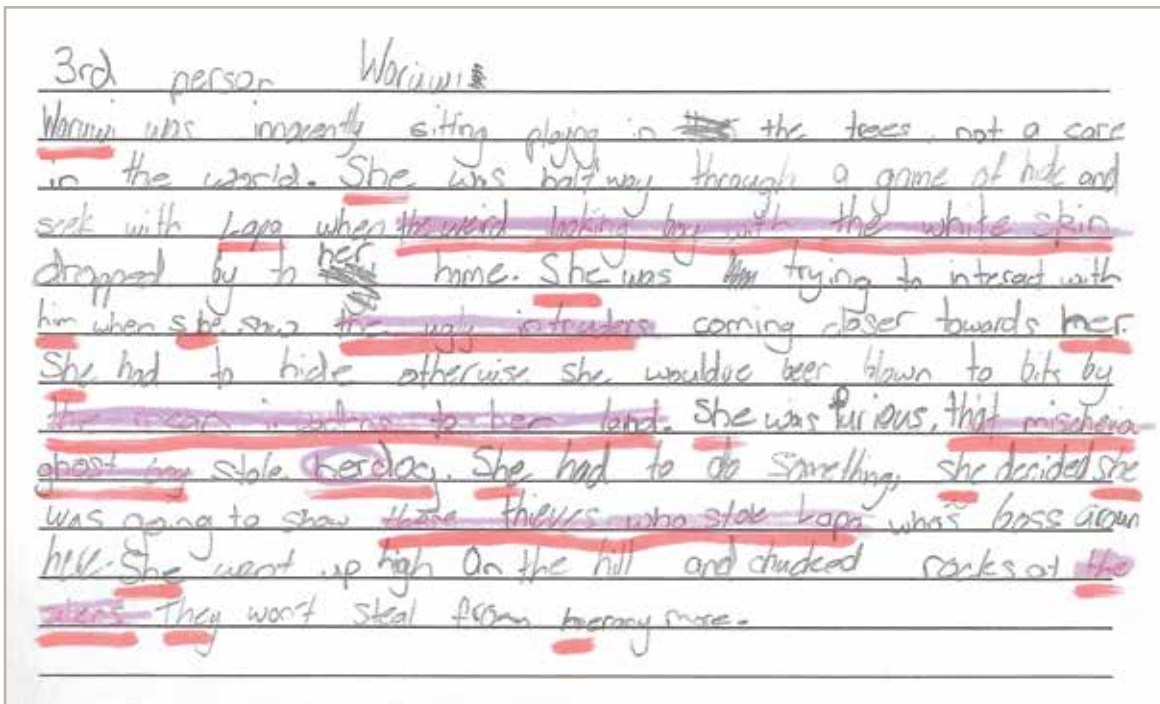
Table 5 Comparison of language choices			
Pre assessment		**Post assessment**	
Lapa	a boy	Waruwi	the weird looking boy with the white skin
a girl with a big heart	Dan, her friend	Lapa	the ugly intruders
	Dan		the mean intruders to her land
	his ugly family		that mischievous ghost boy
	his country		her dog
	a traitor		those thieves who stole Lapa
			the aliens

Summary of a teaching and learning sequence

Building the field

- Pre-assessment task to recount events from the *My place* website: 'First contact' (Figure 3).

- Introduce Learning intentions and Success criteria (Table 4).

- Questioning on how we learn about the past.

- Discuss sources of historical information (primary /secondary).

- Modelled reading to explore differing perspectives surrounding an historical event, eg 'My Country' by Dorothea Mackellar and 'Little Murri be a Murri before an Australian' by Lionel Fogarty. Compare different perspectives due to the writer's context. Conduct a Readers Theatre in which the two authors could meet and share their perspectives about an historical event.

- Use Floorstorming and 'I see, I think, I wonder' (Harvard Visible Thinking) to activate prior knowledge based on images of 'First contact'.

Text deconstruction/modelled reading

- Modelled reading of a range of texts, eg, *The Rabbits* (Marsden, J. & Tan S. 1998), *Australians all* (Wheatley, N. 2013), The 'First Fleet and first contact with local inhabitants' (Skwirk, 2005).

- Identify noun groups representing participants in a range of texts.

- Compare the meaning of the participants in conveying perspective across the texts.

- Small groups develop noun groups to name participants from images.

- View the *My place* video 'First contact Episode 24, 1788*: Dan'* (2011) which shows interaction between Dan, a British boy and an Aboriginal girl, Waruwi. Identify participants and perspectives.

- Continue linking learning to Learning intentions and Success criteria.

Joint construction

- Revisit Learning intentions and Success criteria.

- Re-watch the *My place* video: 'First Contact' and discuss participants.

- Name participants in a table to show varying perspectives of the situation (See Table 5).

- Play Conscience Alley (Drama Resource, 2014). This involves a group forming two lines facing each other. One student takes the role of Dan or Waruwi and walks between the lines. Those on one side give opposing advice to those on the other.

- Discuss choices for writing an historical recount and whether to use first or third person and from whose perspective it is to be written, ie Dan or Waruwi.

- Jointly construct a text with emphasis on participant choices through use of noun groups to convey perspective (see PETAA Paper 196 and video 'The critical conversation about text: Joint construction', Rossbridge & Rushton, 2014).

Independent construction

- Revisit Learning intentions and Success criteria.

- Re-watch *My place* video: 'First Contact'.

- Plan for writing by recording noun groups for naming and describing participants from a particular perspective.

- Students write a text to convey the perspective of one participant.

- After writing identify noun groups.

- Evaluate writing using 3 stars and a wish with reference to Learning intentions and Success criteria.

Resources

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