Learn to swim

Stage 3 [3]
English: Year 5 and Year 6
Students design a flotation device and create an advertising campaign for it using creative language features in informative and persuasive texts.

Stimulus #1: Tin can used as a flotation device in learn-to-swim class, Domain Baths (Sydney), ca 1930s, Sam Hood.

Text Type

Informative:

- discussion questions
- research and interview
- patent description: factual writing

Persuasive:

- creative thinking activity
- composing a slogan
- representation: advertising poster

Background notes for teachers

The photograph, Tin can used as a flotation device in learn-to-swim class, Domain Baths (1930s), was taken by Sydney photographer and photojournalist, Sam Hood (1872-1953). The Domain Baths was a public pool in Sydney that was open to the sea.

Who was Sam Hood?

Sam Hood's career as a photographer began in the late nineteenth century and spanned many significant changes in the history of photography. He took many photographs of ships entering Sydney Harbour that he sold as ship portraits to the visiting crews. Some people believe he photographed every ship entering Sydney Harbour in a career of over sixty years.

Sam Hood opened his first studio in 1899. Throughout his career he continued the usual work of commercial photographers such as photographing family portraits, weddings and even funerals.

In 1918, Sam opened a studio on Pitt Street in Sydney. He expanded his business into press photography, supplying photographs to many newspapers published in Sydney at this time. When he began his career photographs were rarely published by newspapers and most images were hand drawn illustrations made by engravers.

From the mid-1930s newspapers began to employ their own photographers and with fewer commissions Sam then expanded into commercial photography and advertising. He took many important photographs of Sydney buildings.
in the 1930s and 1940s. He also had extensive contacts in the theatre and entertainment industry and took many photographs of celebrities and stars. Sam Hood took many important images of sporting events and documented the social history of New South Wales.

The State Library of New South Wales acquired a collection of negatives from Sam's daughter, Gladys Hood, in 1973. The collection includes nearly 50 000 images of his work. A number of his cameras and accessories are also included in this acquisition. Go to the State Library of NSW's Flickr account [4] to see a photograph of Sam Hood outside his Pitt Street studio.

**Student Activities**

- [Activity 1](#)
- [Activity 2](#)
- [Activity 3](#)

**Activity 1**

**Discussion, research and interview [5]**

Students reflect on their own learn to swim experiences and compare it with the experiences of family and friends.

Number of set tasks: 3
Activity 2

Writing a Patent Description [6]

Students design a flotation device and write a patent for it.

Number of set tasks: 1
Activity 3

Write a slogan [7]

Students write a slogan and design an advertising poster for a flotation device.

Number of set tasks: 2
Activity notes for teachers

- **Activity 1**
- **Activity 2**
- **Activity 3**

**Activity 1**

**Task 1** requires the students to reflect and share their experiences of water play and learning how to swim.

**Task 2** requires students to conduct research into how others learnt to swim.

**Task 3** enables the students to use the information gathered from both Tasks 1 & 2 and apply their knowledge to create a list of twenty objects they think could help a child to float. Please note that these should not be tried at home.

**Teachers should extend their knowledge by searching the Australian guidelines for flotation devices.** In contemporary Australia there are strict safety standards for any object that is sold or used as flotation device.
Teachers share the following information with their students about the development and use of flotation devices.

Sam Hood took the photo, Tin can used as a flotation device in learn-to-swim class, Domain Baths during the 1930’s. At this time, Australia was experiencing the Great Depression. It was a time of great economic hardship for many people.

Large numbers of people were unemployed and people had to make do with what they had. Having little money meant they had to be resourceful. Before the availability of commercially produced flotation devices the use of a tin can as a flotation device was quite common in Australia. These tin cans had a screw top lid which sealed them and were often used for storing liquids such as petrol or kerosene.

In his memoir Romulus, My Father the Australian philosopher Raimond Gaita writes of learning to swim in a dam using a sealed tin can as a flotation device.

The very first flotation devices that are known were inflated animal skins or animal bladders. There are stone carvings from Assyria from ca 800 BC that show soldiers swimming while holding on to an inflated goat skins.

In the days of wooden ships people needing flotation devices would probably cling to items of wreckage that floated when a ship broke up. This might include pieces of wood, barrels and other floating items from the ship.

Once iron ships were built there was little wreckage that shipwrecked people could use as a flotation device. Norwegian sailors of iron ships were the first to carry blocks of cork as a life preserver or flotation device. The thick spongy bark of the cork tree floats extremely well and is used to make corks for wine bottles.

The development of iron ships in the mid nineteenth century resulted in the first life vests being patented in the 1840s. Early flotation vests or belts tended to use cork, a type of plant material called kapok or a very light form of wood called balsa to keep the wearer afloat. Balsa is sometimes used for making model planes.

The first inflatable life jackets did not appear until during World War II. They were known as “Mae West’s” because when they were inflated with air and worn around the chest the wearer then resembled the body of a well-known actress.

Synthetic foam flotation devices were not available until the 1960s.

Modern inflatable vests often include a whistle, warning light and the gas cylinder to automatically fill it with air.

In the 1930s there were no rules or government regulations about the use and manufacture of flotation devices. Nowadays there are strict rules about how they must be made, used and when they should be worn.

Task 3
This task is ideally completed individually under timed conditions (perhaps 3-4 minutes).

Activity 2
Patents
Teachers should explain the purpose of a patent.

Etymology
The word patent comes from the Latin word patere, which means “to lay open.”

How patents work
People who come up with ideas for new inventions will often obtain the patent for it. A patent is granted by a government for a fixed period of time. It means that the owner of it can prevent others from copying their idea. The
A patent is granted in return for the inventor making public their idea in a written description.

Anyone can go to a patent office and look at a description of all the inventions that have received a patent. A patent protects a person’s idea or intellectual property. A patent can be granted for any invention that solves a technological problem. The invention might be a process (such as removing salt from sea water) or product (such as a flotation device).

A patent is granted when the inventor makes their idea available to the public.

First patents

The first patent was granted in 500 BC in the Greek city of Sybaris in Italy.

The first flotation device to be patented was the invention of Napoleon Edouard Guerin of New York. He was issued a patent for “Improvement in Buoyant Dresses or Life-Preservers” on November 16, 1841. Mr Guerin’s design was for a double layered jacket, waistcoat, or coat made of cotton fabric that could hold up to 20 litres of grated cork. The cork in the waistcoat would keep the wearer afloat. His patent even included the design for the tool to grate the cork!

Activity 3

Slogans

What is a slogan?

A slogan is a short phrase or group of words that might be used in marketing or in a religious or political context to express an idea.

A slogan is usually a phrase or one or two short sentences.

Slogans can be written, visual or spoken. Sometimes they are chanted.

The word slogan is an Anglicised (turned into an English word) version of the Scottish word sluagh ghairm tanmy, meaning a war cry.

The most common form of slogan is that used in advertising.

Slogans that are used for marketing or advertising are called taglines in the USA and strap lines in the United Kingdom.

In Japan they are called catch-copy because they are intended to catch people’s attention and make them remember a product or service.

The purpose of an advertising slogan is to communicate the benefits of a product or service and to persuade people to buy it.

Slogans are called pay-offs in Italy for this reason.

Teachers should explain the features of an advertising slogan to the students.

A slogan:

- informs the reader or viewer about the benefits of the product or service for the buyer.
- distinguishes the product from that produced by rival companies
- simple and concise
- witty and has a sense of personality
- catchy or hard to forget
Language features of an advertising slogan

- euphonious- musical or pleasant sounding (easy to say)
- alliteration (repetition of the consonant sound)
- assonance (repetition of a vowel sound)
- antithesis (when two opposites are used in a sentence for contrasting effect e.g. “Many are called but few are chosen”. “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”
- puns (words with one or more meanings) or wordplay
- brevity (brief and uses few words)

NSW SYLLABUS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: ENGLISH K-10

OUTCOMES

A student:

- communicates effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and language forms and features EN3-1A
- composes, edits and presents well-structured and coherent texts EN2-2A
- uses an integrated range of skills, strategies and knowledge to read, view and comprehend a wide range of texts in different media and technologies EN3-3A
- uses knowledge of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary to respond to and compose clear and cohesive texts in different media and technologies EN3-6B
- thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information and ideas and identifies connections between texts when responding to and composing texts EN3-7C
identifies and considers how different viewpoints of their world, including aspects of culture, are represented in texts EN3-8D

CONTENT

Students:

EN3-1A

Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features

- use and describe language forms and features of spoken texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts

Respond to and compose texts

- plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes, making appropriate choices for modality and emphasis
- use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace, according to group size, formality of interaction and needs and expertise of the audience
- discuss and experiment with ways to strengthen and refine spoken texts in order to entertain, inform, persuade or inspire the audience

EN3-2A

Engage personally with texts

- understand and appreciate the way texts are shaped through exploring a range of language forms and features and ideas
- experiment and use aspects of composing that enhance learning and enjoyment

Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features

- plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience

Respond to and compose texts

- compose texts that include sustained and effective use of persuasive devices, e.g. texts dealing with environmental issues

EN3-3A

Develop and apply contextual knowledge

- understand how texts vary in purpose, structure and topic as well as the degree of formality
Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features

- understand that the starting point of a sentence gives prominence to the message in the text and allows for prediction of how the text will unfold

EN3-5B

Develop and apply contextual knowledge

- identify and discuss how own texts have been structured to achieve their purpose and discuss ways of using conventions of language to shape readers' and viewers' understanding of texts
- discuss how the intended audience, structure and context of an extended range of texts influence responses to texts

Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features

- identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text

EN3-6B

Understand and apply knowledge of vocabulary

- understand the use of vocabulary to express greater precision of meaning, and know that words can have different meanings in different contexts

Respond to and compose texts

- select appropriate language for a purpose, e.g. descriptive, persuasive, technical, evaluative, emotive and colloquial, when composing texts
- experiment with different types of sentences, e.g. short sentences to build tension and complex sentences to add detail

EN3-7C

Engage personally with texts

- recognise and explain creative language features in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that contribute to engagement and meaning
- interpret events, situations and characters in texts
- think critically about aspects of texts such as ideas and events

Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features

- understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects
EN3-8D

Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features

- identify language features used to position the reader/viewer in a wide variety of communication activities for a range of purposes, including debates, formal talks, interviews, explanations, anecdotes and recitations

Respond to and compose texts

- discuss and explore moral, ethical and social dilemmas encountered in texts

TEXT REQUIREMENTS

In each year of Stage 3 students must study examples of:

- visual texts
- media, multimedia and digital texts

Across the stage, the selection must give student experience of:

- a wide range of cultural, social and gender perspectives, popular and youth cultures
- an appropriate range of digital texts, including film, media and multimedia
- every day and community texts

LAC

Learning across the curriculum

General Capabilities:

- creative and critical thinking
- literacy
- personal and social capability
- intercultural understanding
- information and communication technology capability

Areas of important learning:

- civics and citizenship

Student Activities

- Activity #1
Activity #1

**Discussion, research and interview** [5]

Students reflect on their own learn to swim experiences and compare it with the experiences of family and friends.

Number of set tasks: 3

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Activity #2

**Writing a Patent Description** [6]
Students design a flotation device and write a patent for it.

Number of set tasks: 1

Activity #3

**Write a slogan** [7]

Students write a slogan and design an advertising poster for a flotation device.

Number of set tasks: 2