Year 8 Poetry

Land of the Rainbow Gold: Australia
POETRY

The key features of poetry can be split into five areas: themes, structure, language, tone and purpose. What do these elements mean? Use the mind map to explain each feature.
Poetic Devices

Alliteration: The repetition of a consonant sound in consecutive words. The repetition is usually located at the beginning of the word.
Example: The slippery slithering slimy snake.

Connotation: When a word suggests something in addition to its ordinary meaning that is its connotation.
Example: Father, dad and daddy all mean your male parent, but they have different connotations in terms of your relationship with him.

Enjambment: This means ‘run on lines’, when the sense of one line ‘runs on’ into the next line.
Example: No more sharing
What the hunter brings.

Hyperbole: The deliberate use of exaggeration to have an effect on the reader.
Example: He knew he was the unluckiest person in the world.

Irony: This is when what is said isn’t quite what is meant. It can also be implied when the opposite of what we expect occurs.
Example: Rain on your wedding day.

Juxtaposition: When two things are placed side by side in order to emphasise their differences. The reader notices the differences more strongly because the two things are placed side by side.
Example: The sky a romantic red, blazed with burning bones, arms and legs.

Metaphor: Something is described in terms of something else.
Example: Her eyes are stars in the sky.

Onomatopoeia: This is when the word itself mimics the sound it is describing.
Example: ‘bang’, ‘hiss’, ‘whip’

Paradox: This is an apparent contradiction that makes sense after you think about it.
Example: ‘Lonely in teeming city crowds’

Personification: Human or animal emotions and qualities are given to non-human things.
Example: The wind howled in agony all day.
Year 8 Poetry Unit

Repetition: When something occurs more than once in the poem. It may be a word that is repeated or an idea.
Example: Alone, alone all all alone
           Alone on a wide wide sea.

Rhetorical Question: A question that is asked for effect; it doesn’t require an answer.
Example: Surely you wouldn’t want to miss out on your lunch break would you?

Simile: A comparison using ‘like’ or ‘as’.
Example: A memory like an elephant
           As sweet as candy.

Other poetic terminology includes:

Tone: The overall quality or feeling of the poem. This is usually denotes the author’s emotions.

Mood: The emotions of the reader created from reading a piece of literature.

Stanza/Verse: Poems do not have paragraphs. Poems are broken up into stanzas/verses. How a poet organises the stanzas/verses in a poem is often an important aspect of the poem’s structure.

Theme: The theme is what the poem is really about; the ideas or attitudes in the poem.

Imagery: Poets use words to create images in the reader’s mind. These images are often sensory images – sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. The images are usually created as a result of the literary devices mentioned earlier in this handout.
The poems which we will study are all about aspects of Australia, and explore our relationship with our country, how poets communicate their own personal concerns and how poets represent Australia.

Look carefully at the following six images of different aspects of Australia.

For each image:

- **choose a section of the image**
- **create a simile** (a comparison that begins with ‘like’ or ‘as’)
- **create a description which appeals to one of the five senses** – sight, sound, smell, taste or touch. Do not name the thing that you are describing.

  e.g. Using the tree in the first image, the simile might be “like arthritic fingers” and the description might be “the gnarled limbs stretching to the heavens” (the dead tree)

When you are thinking about your similes and descriptions for one section of each of the images:

- Discuss your ideas with your neighbour.
- Can they work out what you are describing?
- What tone do they think you are creating with each of these images?

Then **turn each of your chosen sections into a symbol** for something. For example, in the first image the tree could symbolise the struggles of life. Discuss your ideas with your neighbour.
MY COUNTRY *(Listen to recitation)*

The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes.
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins,
Strong love of grey-blue distance
Brown streams and soft dim skies
I know but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror –
The wide brown land for me!

A stark white ring-barked forest
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon.
Green tangle of the brushes,
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us,
We see the cattle die -
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain.
Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the Rainbow Gold,
For flood and fire and famine,
She pays us back threefold -
Over the thirsty paddocks,
Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,
A wilful, lavish land -
All you who have not loved her,
You will not understand -
Though earth holds many splendours,
Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
My homing thoughts will fly.

By Dorothea MacKellar
Questions on “My Country” by Dorothea MacKellar

1. Which country is the poet describing in the first verse and how does she feel about it?
2. List all the features that the poet admires about the Australian landscape.
3. Comment on the structure of the poem (rhyme/verses/change in location/repetition).
4. What overall contrast does the poet provide in verse 2?
5. Find three examples of effective description, copy them correctly and say why they are effective.
6. What negative aspects of Australia are given in verse 4?
7. Find the metaphor used in verse 4 to describe the rain.
8. Find an example of alliteration in verse 5.
9. In what way is Australia personified?
10. How does the poet describe the green paddocks in verse 5?
11. What does the last verse suggest about the poet’s feelings for Australia?
Group Analysis of a Poem

Working in groups of three, you will be allocated ONE of the following poems to analyse and annotate.

- “We Are Going” by Oodgeroo Noonuccal
- “Spiritual Song of the Aborigine” by Hyllus Maris
- “No More Boomerang” by Oodgeroo Noonuccal

➢ Give each line of the poem a number for easy identification.

➢ Read the poem aloud once.

➢ Use a dictionary to find out the meanings of words you do not understand.

➢ Read the poem twice more, after you have established the meanings of any unfamiliar words.

➢ As a group, use the following table to discuss and annotate your allocated poem. Each person in the group must fill in their own table.

➢ Your group will then teach the poem to the class.
# Group Response to Poetry

## To begin
- Consider the title of the poem and name of the poet.
- Try to classify the type of poem it is - e.g. sonnet, ballad, haiku, acrostic, shape, lyric, ode, limerick, elegy, dramatic monologue etc.
- What is the subject of the poem?

## What do you need to know to understand the poem?
- Events
- Specific Words
- Ideas

## Explore the themes of the Poem
- Try to group the ideas in the poem. Is there a story that the poem tells?
- What do you think the main message is?

## Imagery used to express themes
- What are the pictures in the poem?
- Are metaphors/similes used to explain ideas?
- Is there multi-sensory imagery in the poem? - i.e. are the five senses used to evoke certain reactions in the reader?
## Year 8 Poetry Unit

### Form and Structure
- How is the poem organised? - e.g. lines, verses, layout and shape.
- Why has the poet decided to structure the ideas in this way? e.g. the sequence of ideas, length of lines, patterns etc.

### Rhyme and Rhythm
- How does the poem rhyme? - e.g. abab or aabb etc.
- What is the rhythm of the poem when read aloud?
- Why has the poet chosen this rhyme and rhythm to express these ideas?

### Language Techniques
- Think about the sounds of the poem and choice of words.
- The poet uses specific words because they have a certain association in the reader’s mind.
- Look out for alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance, personification, symbolism.
- How has the poet grouped words to achieve a desired effect?

### The Poet’s Message
- What is the poet trying to communicate to the reader? What is the tone?
- How effective are the devices/language that he/she uses?
- What is your response to the poem?
WE ARE GOING

They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent
All that remained of their tribe.
They came here to the place of their old bora ground
Where now the many white men hurry about like ants.
Notice of the estate agent reads: ‘Rubbish May Be Tipped Here’.
Now it half covers the traces of the old bora ring.
‘We are as strangers here now, but the white tribe are the strangers.
We belong here, we are of the old ways.
We are the corroboree and the bora ground,
We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders.
We are the wonder tales of Dream Time, the tribal legends told.
We are the past, the hunts and the laughing games, the wandering camp fires.
We are the lightning bolt over Gaphembah Hill
Quick and terrible,
And the Thunderer after him, that loud fellow.
We are the quiet daybreak paling the dark lagoon.
We are the shadow-ghosts creeping back as the camp fires burn low.
We are nature and the past, all the old ways
Gone now and scattered.
The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter.
The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are gone from this place.
The bora ring is gone.
The corroboree is gone.
And we are going.’

By Oodgeroo Noonuccal
SPIRITUAL SONG OF THE ABORIGINE

I am a child of the Dreamtime People
Part of this Land, like the gnarled gumtree
I am the river, softly singing
Chanting our songs on my way to the sea
My spirit is the dust-devils
Mirages, that dance on the plain
I’m the snow, the wind and the falling rain
I’m part of the rocks and the red desert earth
Red as the blood that flows in my veins
I am eagle, crow and snake that glides
Thorouh the rain-forest that clings to the mountainside
I awakened here when the earth was new
There was emu, wombat, kangaroo
No other man of a different hue
I am this land
And this land is me
I am Australia.

By Hyllus Maris
NO MORE BOOMERANG

No more boomerang
No more spear,
Now all civilised
Colour bar and beer.

No more corroboree
Gay dance and din.
Now we got movies,
And pay to go in.

No more sharing
What the hunter brings.
Now we work for money
Then pay it back for things.

Now we track bosses
To catch a few bob,
Now we go walkabout
On bus to the job.

One time naked,
Who never knew shame,
Now we put clothes on
To hide whatsaname.

No more gunyah,
Now bungalow,
Paid by hire purchase
In twenty years or so.

Lay down the stone axe,
Take up the steel,
Work like a nigger
For a white man's meal.

No more firesticks
That made whites scoff.
Now all electric
And no better off.

Bunyip he finish
Now got instead,
White-fella bunyip
Call him Red.

Abstract picture now—
What they coming at?
Cripes, in our caves we
Did better than that.

Black hunted wallaby,
White hunt dollar;
White-fella witch-doctor
Wear dog collar.

No more message stick;
Lubras and lads
Got television now,
Mostly ads.

Lay down the woomera,
Lay down the waddy,
No we got atom bomb.
End everybody.

By Oodgeroo Noonuccal
THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER by A.B (Banjo) Paterson

'The Man From Snowy River' is a narrative poem that tells the story of a valuable horse that escaped and the princely sum offered by the owner for the safe return. The money offered encouraged all the best riders to capture the horse, including 'Clancy of the Overflow'.

(Listen to recitation)

There was movement at the station, for the word had passed around
That the colt from old Regret had got away,
And had joined the wild bush horses—he was worth a thousand pound,
So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.
All the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far
Had mustered at the homestead overnight,
For the bushmen love hard riding where the wild bush horses are,
And the stock-horse sniffs the battle with delight.

There was Harrison, who made his pile when Pardon won the cup,
The old man with his hair as white as snow;
But few could ride beside him when his blood was fairly up—
He would go wherever horse and man could go.
And Clancy of the Overflow came down to lend a hand,
No better horseman ever held the reins;
For never horse could throw him while the saddle-girths would stand,
He learnt to ride while droving on the plains.

And one was there, a stripling on a small and weedy beast,
He was something like a racehorse undersized,
With a touch of Timor pony—three parts thoroughbred at least—
And such as are by mountain horsemen prized.
He was hard and tough and wiry—just the sort that won't say die—
There was courage in his quick impatient tread;
And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye,
And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

But still so slight and weedy, one would doubt his power to stay,
And the old man said, "That horse will never do
For a long and tiring gallop-lad, you'd better stop away,
Those hills are far too rough for such as you."
So he waited sad and wistful—only Clancy stood his friend—
"I think we ought to let him come," he said
"I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,
For both his horse and he are mountain bred.

He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,
Where a horse's hoofs strike firelight from the flint stones every stride,
The man that holds his own is good enough.
And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their home,
Where the river runs those giant hills between;
I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced to roam,
But nowhere yet such horsemen I have seen."

So he went— they found the horses by the big mimosa clump—
They raced away towards the mountain's brow,
And the old man gave his orders, 'Boys, go at them from the jump,
No use to try for fancy riding now.
And, Clancy, you must wheel them, try and wheel them to the right.
Ride boldly, lad, and never fear the spills,
For never yet was a rider that could keep the mob in sight,
If once they gain the shelter of those hills."

So Clancy rode to wheel them—he was racing on the wing
Where the best and boldest riders take their place,
And he raced his stock-horse past them, and he made the ranges ring
With the stockwhip, as he met them face to face.
Then they haltered for a moment, while he swung the dreaded lash,
But they saw their well-loved mountain in full view,
And they charged beneath the stockwhip with a sharp and sudden dash,
And off into the mountain scrub they flew.

Then fast the horsemen followed, where the gorges deep and black
Resounded to the thunder of their tread,
And the stockwhips woke the echoes, and they fiercely answered back
From cliffs and crags that beetled overhead.
And upward, ever upward, the wild horses held their way.
Where mountain ash and kurrajong grew wide;
And the old man muttered fiercely, "We may bid the mob good day,
No man can hold them down the other side."

When the reached the mountain's summit, even Clancy took a pull,
It well might make the boldest hold their breath,
The wild hop scrub grew thickly, and the hidden ground was full
Of wombat holes, and any slip was death.
But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head,
And he swung his stockwhip round and gave a cheer,
And he raced him down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,
While the others stood and watched in very fear.

He sent the flint stones flying, but the pony kept his feet,
He cleared the fallen timber in his stride,
And the man from Snowy River never shifted in his seat -
It was grand to see that mountain horseman ride.
Through the stingy barks and saplings, on the rough and broken ground
Down the hillside at a racing pace he went;
And he never drew the bridle til he landed safe and sound,
At the bottom of that terrible descent.

He was right among the horses as they climbed the further hill,
And the watchers on the mountain standing mute,
Saw him ply the stockwhip fiercely, he was right among them still,
As he raced across the clearing in pursuit.
Then they lost him for a moment, where the two mountain gullies met
In the ranges, but a final glimpse reveals
On a dim and distant hillside the wild horses racing yet,
With the man from Snowy River at their heels.

And he ran them single-handed till their sides where white with foam.
He followed like a bloodhound on their track,
Til they halted cowed and beaten, then he turned their heads for home,
And alone and unassisted brought them back.
But his hardy mountain pony, could scarcely raise a trot,
He was blood from hip to shoulder from the spur;
But his pluck was still undaunted, and his courage fiery hot,
For never yet was mountain horse a cur.
And down by Kosciusko, where the pine-clad ridges raise
Their torn and rugged battlements on high,
Where the air is clear as crystal, and the white stars fairly blaze
At midnight in the cold and frosty sky,
And where around the Overflow the reedbeds sweep and sway
To the breezes, and the rolling plains are wide,
The man from Snowy River is a household word to-day,
And the stockmen tell the story of his ride.

By A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson
“The Man from Snowy River” by A.B. (Banjo) Paterson

For Discussion:

- Who are the main characters?
- Where is this story set?
- When might it have been written? Explain your answer.
- What words are typically Australian?
- Is the story fast paced or slow? How can you tell?
- How does Banjo Patterson’s use of language create dramatic effect?
- Who was the poet’s likely audience?

CLASS RECITATION

In pairs, you will be allocated ONE verse of the poem to recite as part of a whole class rendition of the poem.

- Each pair is to practise reading aloud their verse.
- Focus on your volume, pace, pitch, intonation, enunciation, body language and so on.
- The poem will then be performed as a class group.
DROUGHT YEAR

That time of drought the embered air
burned to the roots of timber and grass.
The crackling lime-scrub would not bear
and Mooni Creek was sand that year.
The dingo's cry was strange to hear.

I heard the dingoes cry
in the scrub on the Thirty-mile Dry.
I saw the wedgetail take his fill
perching on the seething skull.
I saw the eel wither where he curled
in the last blood-drop of a spent world.

I heard the bone whisper in the hide
of the big red horse that lay where he died.
Prop that horse up, make him stand,
hoofs turned down in the bitter sand
make him stand at the gate of the Thirty-mile Dry.
Turn this way and you will die-
and strange and loud was the dingoes' cry.

By Judith Wright
Questions on “Drought Year” by Judith Wright

1. Identify all the sounds heard by the poet. Which sound has made the strongest impression on her?
2. Find an example of alliteration.
3. Find an example of personification.
4. Which line in the poem suggests the danger presented by the drought?
5. How might the following photo support the ideas in the poem? Which image do you think is the strongest? Choose an adjective to describe it and say why you made this choice.
SONG OF THE SURF

Starting
softly, silently,
it swishes
softly
slowly searching
for its strength
it sighs
for songs
it wants
to sing
some sanctity
it sighs
it sings
it seeks
within the sea.
It moves, it waves,
it gathers hope,
it grows, it flows,
it dreams, it mopes,
it swells, it stretches,
loves and lives,
and ripples at
the hulls of ships.
It crashes hard
upon the rocks,
it rips stone
from the crumbling docks
it crashes, craves,
it thumps, it sprays
it rips at shores,
its ozone spray
will rip at roots
will uproot trees,

it sings the power
of the seas.
It celebrates
its salty strength,
it touches skies,
it waves and flies,
leaves seaweed
as a parting gift,
and driftwood, too
as if to say,
`This is the power,
this was my day.'
It spends its strength,
it sings, it sighs.
The wave recedes,
and slowly dies.

By Dan Ashlin
Questions on “Song of the Surf” by Dan Ashlin

1. What does ‘it’ refer to in the poem?
2. Identify the stages in the life cycle of the wave.
3. How does the poet convey the changing movement of the wave? Explain, giving examples from each verse.
4. Which sound dominates the poem?
5. How does the structure of the poem reflect the subject matter?
6. Quote 4 examples of onomatopoeia and explain how their sounds and meanings create effective images.
7. How does the poet use personification to individualise one particular wave in the last verse?

Choose one of the following natural features and write your own one paragraph description.

- Sun
- Moon
- Wind
- River
- Waterfall
- Cyclone
- Rain
- Tree

Think about the sounds of the words you might choose and the images they portray: try to use multi-sensory imagery.
ODE TO ULURU

Revered rock, you gaze upon us
Hard set wisdom in the veins
Of colour coursing down your face
Softened by the summer rains.

Haughty rock, you survive unbroken
As nature's storms assault your chest
Your courage rests in thoughts unspoken
Sardonic smiles when fury rests.

Exquisite rock, you glow with glory
Sunset draping shimmering quilt,
In air's vibrations hang the stories
Of the tribes and blood now spilt.

Majestic rock, you lie with spirits
Of the Dreaming, dream at night
Of the Old Ones chanting lyrics
Dancing till the dawn's new light.

Uncompromising rock, you stand
In silence, countless eons old
Hugging the flatness of the land
Proud like the Sphinx, secrets untold.
Remembering the ceremonies, remembering the songs
Reliving the journeys, mourning those wronged.

By Michelle Williams
Questions on “Ode to Uluru” by Michelle Williams

1. How does the poet describe Uluru in each verse? Identify the words used. Name the poetic technique and then explain the image in your own words.

2. Who is the audience?

3. An ode is a poem that you sing or is a poem honouring a specific person or subject. It is usually written in present tense. How does this poem match this definition?

4. What does the first word reveal about the poet’s attitude to her subject?

5. The poet refers to the ‘Dreaming’. What is this?

6. In verses 3 and 4, the poet refers to the special relationship between Indigenous people and the landscape. How does she communicate this?

7. Find an example of
   • alliteration
   • assonance

Research an Indigenous story about Uluru.

➢ Briefly summarise the story. (1-2 paragraphs)

➢ Include a visual.
BUSHFIRE

Shadows camouflage
the menacing pelt
snarling
hungry for prey.
Tawny grass parts into
stripes of sunburnt yellow
and black.
Sulphureous eyes
devour the hills
craving
creek beds.
White ash underbelly
rumbles with the need
to feed.
Rasping tongue tossed
by blazing breath
the predator roars
its rage.
Leaping hell-hot claws stab
the crown's rump
spilling its life in a shower
of embers
under a blood-red sky.

By Maggy Saldais
Questions on “Bushfire” by Maggy Saldaïs

1. Define: camouflage, pelt, sulphureaous, predator
2. Which animal is being described in the bushfire?
3. What does this animal represent?
4. List the sequence of events for the animals described.
5. List the sequence of events for the fire.
6. How do the short lines and single word lines contribute to the mood of the poem? Use supporting quotes.
7. Which words and phrases capture the threatening atmosphere of the poem? How effective are they?
8. ‘Bushfire’ is an extended metaphor using a series of images linking the fire to an animal. Identify one image that creates a picture of each of the following:
   - Movement
   - Sound
   - Colour
   - Heat

   For each metaphor, explain which part of the fire and the animal is being described.
9. Using examples, explain how the poet uses alliteration to add to the images she presents.

Watch the film clip of a bushfire in Victoria in January 2013.

- Choose 5 words/phrases from the news report that are used to describe the bushfire.
- Which image do you think best depicts the nature of bushfires? Why did you make this choice?

Create an A4 collage representing the ideas in the poem.
I am the spirit of the tree.
I've stood here since your grandad's birth,
the maker of your oxygen,
the lungs, you might say, of the earth.
I've stood here for a hundred years
of soft-green leaves and gentle bowers,
but the rasping of that saw tells me
my lifespan moves down into hours.
The roots that go back into time
my moss-strewn trunk, my woody girth.
I stand for peace and permanence,
the chain-saw cuts for barren earth.
For all us trees thought we were safe.
We couldn't know it was our fate
to spread our leaves upon a land
you call 'Desirable Real Estate'.
Your needs were all for double-brick,
and dreary, neat sterility.
You didn't want the gentle shade,
or need the spirit of the tree.
The land was fertile, lush, and green,
a tranquil creek, and curling vines.
One day we saw surveyor's tape,
and then, a brightly coloured sign:
\textit{A residential paradise,}
\textit{quite close to schools, and shopping malls.}
\textit{A playground for our darling kids,}
within the sound \textit{of bellbird calls.}
Your poet said that only God
can make a tree. He didn't say
a man and saw can cut it down,
a loader take the corpse away.
If not for me, your soil erodes,
your children breathe because of me.
I give you life, you give me death.
I am the spirit of the tree.
And now, I feel the chainsaw's cut,
the sawdust blots the sun in gloom.
All you can say is that I died
that you might have your rumpus room,
your ensuite in its tasteful blue,
your playground and your swimming pool.
The avenue that bears my name?
A joke! There's no trees left at all.
So as you mow your inch-high lawn,
maybe spare a thought for me.
I am the one that you replaced.
I am the spirit of the tree.

By Alan Smith
Questions on “Tree” by Alan Smith

1. Whose feelings and point of view are expressed in this poem?
2. What environmental issue is being addressed by the poet?
3. Which environmental benefits are referred to by the poet?
4. According to the poet, what will replace the tree?
5. Explain how the line ‘I give you life, you give me death’ expresses the theme of the poem.
6. The poet gives the tree human qualities by speaking as the voice of the tree’s spirit. What technique is this called? How does the use of this technique strengthen the message of the poem? Are there any other examples of personification?
7. List some words and phrases that describe the natural scene in the poem.
8. List some words and phrases that describe the man-made scene in the poem.
9. How do contrasting descriptions reveal the poet’s opinion?
Municipal Gum (*Listen to recitation*)

Gumtree in the city street,
Hard bitumen around your feet,
Rather you should be
In the cool world of leafy forest halls
And wild bird calls
Here you seems to me
Like that poor cart-horse
Castrated, broken, a thing wronged,
Strapped and buckled, its hell prolonged,
Whose hung head and listless mien express
Its hopelessness.
Municipal gum, it is dolorous
To see you thus
Set in your black grass of bitumen--
O fellow citizen,
What have they done to us?

By Oodgeroo Noonuccal
Questions on “Municipal Gum” by Oodgeroo Noonuccal

1. In the first two lines, what does the poet find that disturbs her?
2. In what two ways are the gum tree and cart horse alike?
3. How do we know the cart horse is feeling hopelessness?
4. Where is contrast (juxtaposition) in line 14?
5. What does the poet mean by ‘fellow citizen’?
6. What similarities does the poet see between herself and the gum tree?
7. What is the mood of this poem?
8. What does this poem reveal about the poet’s understanding of nature?
9. What do you think are the strengths of this poem?
10. Compare “Tree” by Alan Smith and “Municipal Gum” by Oodgeroo Noonuccal. In what ways are they similar and how are they different? Compare the poetic techniques used.
Thongs are like footprints

Thongs are leftover footsoles.  
They are a part of their owners,  
More human and personal  
Than shirts or underpants.

Though put aside for the moment  
They give notice of feet returning,  
A continuing presence.

Thongs have character -  
Toemarks in gentle indentations  
More certain than fingerprints,  
And the pressure of heels.

Thongs serve endlessly  
In bathroom and kitchen,  
Backyard, laundry, and the newspaper shop  
On Sunday morning.

Thongs leap about on beaches  
Or lie discarded in the sand,  
Dog-bitten and strap-ruptured  
Among the happy people.

Thongs know the feel of the ground;  
They are like people’s footprints left lying around.

By Colin Thiele
Questions on “Thongs are like footprints” by Colin Thiele

1. Each verse describes a different aspect of that popular Australian footwear - thongs.
   Draw an A4 outline of a rubber thong and summarise each aspect represented in the poem inside the shape you have drawn.
2. In what ways are thongs “a continuing presence”?
3. How does the poet give thongs a sense of life?
4. What simile is used by the poet to describe thongs?
Homo Suburbiensis (View storyboard)

One constant in a world of variables
- A man alone in the evening in his patch of vegetables,
and all the things he takes down with him there

Where the easement runs along the back fence and the air
smells of tomato-vines, and the hoarse rasping tendrils
of pumpkin flourish clumsy whips and their foliage sprawls

Over the compost-box, poising rampant upon
the palings ...
He stands there, lost in a green
confusion, smelling the smoke of somebody’s rubbish

Burning, hearing vaguely the clatter of a disk
in a sink that could be his, hearing a dog, a kid,
a far whisper of traffic, and offering up instead

Not much but as much as any man can offer
- time, pain, love, hate, age, ware, death, laughter, fever.

By Bruce Dawe
Questions on “Homo Suburbiensis” by Bruce Dawe

1. How important is the vegetable patch to the man in the poem. Why?
2. What metaphor is used to describe the pumpkins?
3. What is the ‘green confusion’ mentioned in verse 3?
4. What noises does he hear in verse 4?
5. What is meant by the last line?
6. Comment on the title. (Homo is Latin for man and suburbiensis is a play on a scientific term that is used to describe a group of humans e.g. Homo Habilis had increased brain size and were the first to use stone tools; we are referred to as Homo Sapiens – wise man)
POETRY WRITING

Now it’s your turn to write a poem!

➢ The subject must have something to do with Australia
➢ Give it a title
➢ Your poem does not have to rhyme
➢ You must include 5 poetic techniques (e.g. simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, alliteration, repetition, sensory imagery, personification, juxtaposition, enjambment...)
➢ Aim for at least 4 verses (or equivalent)
➢ Present on A4
➢ The final copy of your poem can be typed (interesting font/colours/use a large font size so the poem fits well on the page)
➢ You must include a relevant visual
➢ You must include the poet’s name (you!) at the bottom of the poem

Sources:
Poetry for Secondary Students Sadler Hayllar Powell Macmillan 1997
Tapestry Poetry for Secondary Students Michelle Williams Jacaranda 2004
Appreciating Poetry Sadler Hayller Powell MacMillan 1986