

External assessment

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Stimulus book

# English & Literature Extension

## General instruction

- Work in this book will not be marked.



Queensland  
Government



Queensland Curriculum  
& Assessment Authority

## Stimulus 1

### *Michael on the Moon*

Inside Michael's bedroom, planet and star shapes hung off strung-up coat hangers. Model rockets and spaceships sat on a shelf, each one carefully painted with the stickers glued in the right places. A giant colour-in of the solar system was spread across one wall. Underneath, Michael had pinned cut-outs from his dad's newspaper: shots of Apollo 11, Aldrin, Armstrong and Collins before the launch, other Apollos, a fiery lift-off that Michael loved, the famous Russian dog Laika.

Last year, Michael had asked his mother if she would sew a yellow moon onto his bed-blanket. 'And some stars?' She'd smiled and they'd negotiated three: one red, one white, one blue. 20th July 1969, the morning of the moon landing. Michael was beyond excited. The day before, his teacher, Mr Mac, had told the class that tomorrow at nine o'clock they'd be going to the library with all the other classes to watch the television. They'd see the moon landing as it happened and it would be like stepping down themselves and walking carefully across that strange and wondrous surface.

One day, thought Michael happily, that will be me. He got to school and lined up outside the classroom with the other children. Someone kicked the back of his knee but he didn't turn around because he knew that the kicker would be Dwight Rose. Dwight Rose was always kicking, pinching and sly-punching. He put pins on chairs, upturned ink pots inside the desks and jabbed between the shoulder blades with his steel ruler.

When I get to the moon, thought Michael, there will be no Dwight Rose. The door opened but it wasn't Mr Mac. A lady stood there. She said, 'Class, I am your teacher for today. My name is Mrs Best. Forward in quietly.'

The children trooped towards the door. Michael wondered about Mr Mac. Maybe he was sick? Anyway, the new lady seemed nice enough. He was near the doorway when Dwight Rose gave him a quick, hidden shove. Michael, who'd been daydreaming about one day seeing Halley's Comet, barrelled into Emily Hoskin. Emily, a sensitive girl who always wore pink ribbons, fell down and began to wail. Mrs Best pointed at Michael and said, 'I saw that! You can stay outside, young man!'

There was no point in protesting. Dwight Rose marched past and sniggered. Michael stood in the corridor. There was a clock up the end, indicating a quarter-to-nine. Fearful and upset, he waited. At nine o'clock precisely, the door opened again. Mrs Best led the class out and told them to go to the library immediately, no dilly-dallying or shilly-shallying. She looked at Michael and said, 'You, however, will stay here. After that little display this morning, you don't deserve to see those brave heroes landing on the moon.'

He wanted to tell her — but it wasn't me! Dwight Rose — Dwight Rose! But no. He knew from past experience, don't complain. Don't make a scene. There's no point, because nothing ever happens. Here, on Earth, the Dwight Roses always win. He stood near the wall, anchored by deep misery. The clock said 9.15. They'll be orbiting, he thought. Or coming out of the orbit, dropping down and finding a good place to land. In the school library, in houses and offices and buildings across the world, people will be watching, marvelling at the cleverness of it all. That humankind can do this! Man on the moon!

9.25. Michael wept. ‘Michael?’

He looked up. Mr De Soya, the headmaster, stood before him. ‘Michael, you’re missing the moon landing.’

He blubbered about the accident in the line and Emily Hoskin’s tears and how the new teacher Mrs Best had said —

‘Come with me,’ Mr De Soya told him. Michael followed him to the main office. Detention? Phone call home? Maybe they’d expel him and he’d be known forever as *that boy*, an utter disgrace — ‘In here,’ said Mr De Soya briskly.

There was a huge desk in his office, pot plants, chairs — and a television in the corner. Mr De Soya indicated a chair. He turned on the television and sat next to Michael. ‘Michael,’ he said, ‘whatever happened before, you have to see the moon landing. Everyone should see it. We’re about to watch history.’

9.31. The screen flickered. Michael saw the tiny spaceship land, a puff of moon dust under each leg. The hatch opened and an astronaut appeared. It was Neil Armstrong. He eased down the ladder. Mr De Soya said, ‘Yes!’ The astronaut’s foot hovered agonisingly, as if uncertain, then dropped down and touched the moon.

Cheering, in the distance. But as Michael watched the screen, that noise faded. All noise faded. Everything around him disappeared and it was like being there, on the moon, with the other astronauts. He saw his own feet clomping across the uneven surface, felt the lightness around his body, the lift and sway, the starlight blinking in his visor, the craters dropping away. Then he looked into the void and saw Earth on the rim of that vast darkness. The planet was blue and alone. Michael felt a rush of happiness. He was glad to be where he was. He looked back to the beauty of the moon and kept walking, kept swinging his arms and being free, forever free.

## Stimulus 2

### *Justice in the City*

#### 9. INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM. MID-MORNING

The room is bare other than a STEEL, BOLTED-DOWN TABLE WITH THREE STEEL CHAIRS. A fluorescent light casts a cool light in the room. Two police officers, SERGEANT CARRAWAY and SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING, sit on one side of the table. On the other side of the table, sitting back with his arms resolutely folded across his chest, is MARK. The room is stuffy and hot. Beads of sweat form on each man's forehead. A single CEILING FAN circles above the men. It is rickety and sways dangerously as it rotates at full speed. Its sound is heard throughout the interview. Senior Constable Keating stands, walks to the side of the table, places his hands next to Mark, and leans down so that he is almost at eye level.

SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING

You know what, mate? We are a bit sick and tired of waiting for you to own up to this. We know what you did. Your boss knows what you did. You know what you did. Why don't you save us all a bit of grief and confess?

MARK

(turning his head to avoid eye contact)

I'm not talking without a lawyer.

SERGEANT CARRAWAY

Your court-appointed public defender will be here any minute now. We just think that it's in your best interest to come clean. Any judge will look favourably upon you if you fess up and own your mistakes.

SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING

Mate, there's no denying it. The evidence is stacked against you. The paper trail leads directly to you. If you don't speak up, the judge and the jury will think you've wasted everyone's time and money. You don't want to anger a jury, mate. Let me tell you. A happy jury and a happy judge mean a lighter sentence. It's a basic equation.

MARK

Like I said, I'm not talking without a lawyer.

SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING

All right, all right. Have it your way. But it's your funeral, mate. We are just trying to help. You're far too soft for jail. You won't last five minutes. It's survival of the fittest in there and you're not fit for it.

SERGEANT CARRAWAY

Look, while we wait for the lawyer, why don't we go over the facts of the case. Maybe you can help us out a bit. Tell us where we are wrong. You were there. You know the story. How about you fill in the blanks for us, hey?

Mark lets out an exasperated sigh. He shakes his head lightly but still does not offer any information.

SERGEANT CARRAWAY

Look, we can trace all the transactions back to you. We know you were moving money and transferring it into an offshore bank account. We know you were doing it for years. We know you siphoned over 600 grand from BOWW Insurance. Every recovered transaction is authorised by you. Sure, it's not your name but we know it's you. We can trace it back to your office, your computer. We just don't know why you did it.

MARK

Not without a lawyer.

SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING

(slamming his hands down on the table)

Do you really think your lawyer can get you  
out of this?

He opens the file and pulls out copies of DIRECT DEBITS and BANK  
STATEMENTS.

SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING (CONT'D)

(pointing to the transactions)

This is your signature.

(pointing repeatedly)

Here it is again ... and again.

He pulls out a photograph of Mark with a woman and a small girl.

SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING (CONT'D)

Think of your family. How will they survive  
with you in jail?

Pause – Mark looks away but doesn't speak.

SENIOR CONSTABLE KEATING (CONT'D)

I am going to walk out of the room for five  
minutes and when I get back, you're going to  
have come to your senses.

Senior Constable Keating storms out of the interview room, slamming  
the door behind him. Sergeant Carraway stands, picks up a chair  
and places it gently next to Mark. He sits down and places a file in  
front of Mark.

SERGEANT CARRAWAY

The thing is, Mark, as you can see ...

He gestures to the file.

SERGEANT CARRAWAY (CONT'D)

The evidence is overwhelming. You're not going to get off. But I can tell you're a good man. You don't have a record. You're respectable. You'd worked for BOWW Insurance for 25 years. I reckon something snapped. What was it? Did they treat you like dirt? Were you sick of the corporate scum – only caring about the bottom line? You're a good man, Mark. But unless you can give us a good reason, you're going away for a damn long time.

MARK

(quietly)

She was sick.

(beat)

She was sick, my little girl. She was sick and she wasn't getting any better. There was a drug that could help her but it cost \$22 000 for each round of treatment – one every three months.

He turns to look Sergeant Carraway in the face.

MARK (CONT'D)

You tell me you would have done differently. You tell me that you would have watched your baby girl get sicker and sicker, all the while knowing there was something that could help her. It's not right. People making millions from other people dying. People making a living out of my girl's sickness. Tell me, what would you have done?

SERGEANT CARRAWAY

The same, mate. I would have done the same.

### Stimulus 3

#### *Reclaiming*

Many wonder why I devoted my entire artistic career to painting one type of tree, over and over again. Some think it is limiting. My agent thinks it's a trademark, a 'brand'. He's right, I suppose. Sometimes I see printed tote bags on the shoulders of fellow commuters travelling to the city. The words 'Arisa Nakamura Retrospective 2019' sit above a bright purple replication of my 2001 painting, *Reclaiming*. The artwork has been cropped slightly so it fits on the square canvas material, but you can still see the roots of the jacaranda tree pushing through the bitumen of a suburban street. Lilac and brown flowers litter the footpath. Newly dropped, vibrant petals thinly veil an old dining chair someone has gifted a local resident, or the garbage collector. The chair has seen better days.

Of course I am flattered anyone would buy my 'merch', but the pride is slightly squashed by thoughts that this tote bag conveys even less than the painting itself, which was also just a mere facsimile of my childhood memories. The image in my work has taken on another life that is not my own. It now holds groceries, laptops, and represents a myriad of meanings to those who view it. Perhaps it simply memorialises a trip to the art gallery for some. For others, it might remind them of a local street. In artist's statements for galleries, I have put into words what I think the painting means to me, but even those capture just a sliver.

After living in Tokyo for my first eight years, I was certainly accustomed to the soupy-hot summers that Queensland would serve each year. My English was shaky, but its growth correlated with my height until, at fourteen, even my Japanese had an Australian twang, and I was as tall as I would ever be. My parents took twice as long to adjust to Australia, and they still say 'Howsit go-in' with a distinct Japanese flair. We would venture annually to Japan to visit family during cherry blossom season and Golden Week.

I remember the ceremony attached to cherry blossom season. Upon seeing the pastel-pink sakura trees, my father would stop speaking or communicating. He would just contemplate. Each tree was admired by millions of eyes drinking a sip of tranquil nature within a torrent of concrete and glass. The flowering cherry blossom season was an event to behold, and its short window made it special, rare, appreciated by all. The trees were confined to tiny pockets of nature, cultivated with care.

On our suburban street, every October, the jacarandas would bloom in much the same way as the Tokyo sakura trees. Every shade of purple was on display, and the petals would layer the unsealed edges of the road. In afternoon storms the petals became a thick brown sludge, which many neighbours would grumble about. The trees ate into the edge of the road, longing to gain back a little more of the soil that had been hidden beneath streets and parked cars. There was no ceremony here. No one bothered to comment all that much on the jacarandas. They would say, 'They are pretty at first but the one outside my house makes my car dirty' or 'I can't remember the last time I noticed them'. Even my father, who would stare wistfully into the cherry blossoms, would leave the jacarandas unnoticed. Maybe they weren't rare enough in Queensland. They bloomed longer, scattered every other street, and were often paved with bins and decomposing catalogues.

I saw something in those trees. Their awkward dark-brown branches, gnarled and angled, would give way to the gentlest lavender colours once a year. My family didn't see it, nor did the general Queensland population. In a way, their abundance, their normalcy, their unceremonious placements across each stretch of my town, was part of their beauty. My town had nature everywhere, so there was no need to stop and notice it. In Tokyo, celebration and curation of a tiny bit of nature would stop a city annually. When I started painting, I wanted to voice these feelings somehow. I wanted my works to speak to the mundane way these beautiful trees were regarded — the collective shrug of shoulders. Each of my jacaranda paintings has the ordinary mixed with the extraordinary. The sludge features in many. Someone's discarded shoes sit on the sidewalk next to one jacaranda. They are a part of this town as much as the people and often people go unnoticed too. There is something beautiful in that.



My father, much older now, loves jacarandas as much as the cherry blossoms. That may have more to do with the fact that I have built a career on memorialising them. As my art gained recognition across Australia and Asia, so did the iconography of the jacarandas. People would tell me how I had captured my home town so authentically, and I would politely smile in return. I didn't. But I'm fine with that. These paintings are just a tiny snapshot of a lifetime of memories in my hometown, and my travels to Japan. When people think they understand what I'm getting at, they have probably just found the same genre of music, but they don't yet know the notes. These words are the same.

I smile when I see the tote bag on the bus another time. The screen-printed version of *Reclaiming* seems to have far less nuance. Many hues of purple are culled to only three or four. It says something different now. In my youth I might have been frustrated that my work has become a trinket, but now I am just slightly bemused. I realise that my art only says a portion of what it means to me. You can only ever share a part of yourself, your memories, your thoughts. The rest remains hidden or goes unnoticed. Like blooming jacarandas in a street once a year.

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