



Teacher Resource

Focus Questions

As a class, discuss the stories featured in the episode of BTN Classroom and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following focus questions.

Russian Nuclear Treaty

1. What questions do you have about the story? Discuss the story as a class.
2. What percentage of the world's nuclear weapons are owned by Russia and the United States?
 - a. 10%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 90%
3. What country did the US drop a nuclear bomb on in 1945?
4. Where did Russia build nuclear missile bases in the 1960s?
5. Russia's President has recently put a hold on signing a treaty to reduce nuclear weapons. True or false?

Roald Dahl Changes

1. What Roald Dahl books are being changed? Name one.
2. What changes are being made to Roald Dahl books?
3. What is a 'sensitivity reader'?
4. What other authors have had their books changed?
5. Do you think Roald Dahl books should be changed? Why or why not?

Check out the [teacher](#) resource on the Archives page.

Mosquito Diseases

1. Why is there an increase in mosquitoes this year?
2. What weather conditions are mosquitoes most active in?
 - a. Warm and wet
 - b. Cold and rainy
 - c. Warm and dry
3. What disease can be spread to humans by mosquitoes? Name one.
4. What virus has been detected in mosquitoes in the Riverland in South Australia?

EPISODE 4

28th February 2023

KEY LEARNING

Students will view a range of BTN stories and use comprehension skills to respond to a series of focus questions.

CURRICULUM

English – Year 4

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts.

English – Year 5

Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources.

English – Year 6

Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts.

English – Year 7

Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources.

5. How can you protect yourself from mosquito bites?

Future of Letter Writing

1. Why are fewer letters being delivered these days?
2. What changes is Australia Post proposing?
3. The average Australian household receives just over one letter a week. True or false?
4. Who owns Australia Post?
5. Make some predictions about how the postal system might change in the future.

Check out the [teacher](#) resource on the Archives page.

Daniel's Life and Languages

1. What is Daniel's disability?
2. Where was Daniel born?
3. What job does Daniel want to do after school?
4. What volunteer work does Daniel do?
5. What languages is Daniel fluent in?



Teacher Resource

Roald Dahl Changes

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What Roald Dahl books are being changed? Name one.
2. What changes are being made to Roald Dahl books?
3. What is a 'sensitivity reader'?
4. What other authors have had their books changed?
5. Do you think Roald Dahl books should be changed? Why or why not?

Activity: Class Discussion

After watching the BTN Roald Dahl Changes story hold a class discussion, using the following as discussion starters:

- What Roald Dahl Books do you know? Write a list of Roald Dahl books that you are familiar with.
- Have you read any Roald Dahl books? If so, which ones?
- What do you like about his books?
- Why are Roald Dahl's books being changed?
- What has changed in his books?
- What are people saying about the changes to Roald Dahl's books?



Activity: Personal Response

Students will write a personal response to the BTN Roald Dahl Changes story. Ask students to finish one or more of the following incomplete sentences:

- It was interesting to learn...
- These are five words that I would use to describe Roald Dahl's writing ...
- Roald Dahl is an important author because...

EPISODE 4

28th February 2023

KEY LEARNING

Students will explore Roald Dahl's use of language.

CURRICULUM

English – Year 4

Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension.

English – Year 4

Create literary texts by developing storylines, characters, and settings.

English – Year 5

Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors.

English – Year 6

Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways.

English – Year 6

Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways.

Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text.

English – Year 6

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.

Activity: Persuasive Text

Students will explore the issues raised in the BTN Roald Dahl Changes story and then develop a persuasive text for or against the following statement: *'Roald Dahl books should be rewritten to remove language deemed offensive by the publisher'*. Students need to weigh up the pros and cons of the issue then write a short persuasive argument using the following as a guide.

Some issues to consider are:

- What does the term censorship mean?
- Why have the changes to Roald Dahl books been criticised?
- What is a sensitivity reader? What is their purpose?

Tips

- Who is your audience? For example, are you directing your argument at kids, teachers, or politicians?
- Explore how language choices can have a big impact on persuading your audience.
- Which language devices give the report credibility and authority?
- Which are designed to create an emotional response in the listener?
- Provide facts and evidence to support your argument.
- Write in the present tense.
- Check your spelling and punctuation.

Use this *Read Write Think* [persuasion map](#) to plan your exposition text.

Introduction

- What is the point you are trying to argue?
Construct an introductory paragraph which states the issue or topic.
- Introduce the arguments that will be developed in the body of the text.

Body

- Construct arguments that support your point of view.
- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence which introduces each point.
- The rest of the paragraph gives more reasons.
- Arguments can be ordered from strongest to weakest.

Conclusion

- Restate your position on the argument.
- Construct a concluding paragraph that provides a summary of your arguments and a call to action.

Reflection

- How difficult was it to think of points to support one side of the argument?
- Do you think you would have done a better job supporting the other side of the argument?
- Was I able to convince others of my opinion?
- What did you learn from this activity?

Activity: Class poll

Hold a poll in your class. Students will conduct their own opinion poll on the issue of whether Roald Dahl books should be changed. Working in groups, students will need to decide who their sample group will be and how many people will be polled. What method will they use to conduct the poll? (Face to face interviews or written responses). Ask students to graph the opinion poll results and then reflect on the results.



Activity: Language

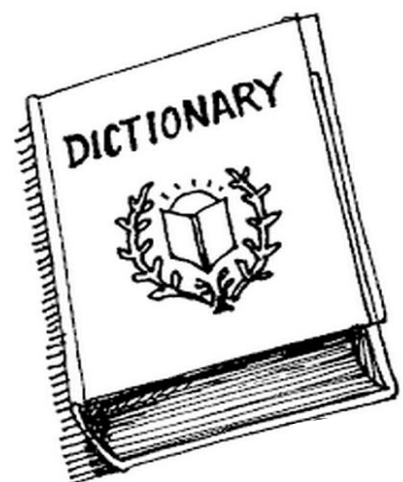
Gobblefunk is the language Roald Dahl invented to use in many of his books. Dahl thought that the made-up words were a way of making his books more interesting. Ask students to find out the meanings to the following Gobblefunk words then put them into a sentence. Refer to Newsround's [dictionary](#) of Gobblefunk words. Students can also be encouraged to create their own Gobblefunk words.

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example in a sentence
<i>Hopscotchy</i>		
<i>Crodsquinkled</i>		
<i>Squibbling</i>		
<i>Whizzpopping</i>		
<i>Trogglehumper</i>		
<i>Quogwinkle</i>		
<i>Phizz-whizzing</i>		

Activity: Fictionary game

In small groups of 3 or 4, students will play the game "fictionary". One student will choose an unusual word from a dictionary and secretly write the definition on a piece of paper. The other students in the group will each write a made up definition on a piece of paper, which is written in a way that sounds convincing. Place each of the pieces of paper in a hat.

The definitions, including the real definition, are then read aloud to the group in random order. Each student will record which definition they believe is correct. The real definition will then be revealed!



Activity: Book review

Students will choose a book written by Roald Dahl and then write a book review.

- What are the themes in the book?
- What did you like or dislike about the book? Why?
- Would you recommend the book to other kids your age? Why or why not?
- Include an illustration with your review. It could be a sketch of the front cover or one of the characters from the story.
- Tip: Think about the audience you are trying to reach. Use effective vocabulary and accurate and persuasive language.
- Class activity! Hold your own class book club. Everyone will read the same Roald Dahl book, either individually or as a class and then discuss the story.



Some of Roald Dahl's books have been made into movies. Students may choose to review a movie that's based on one of his novels.

Activity: Exquisite Corpse

Exquisite corpse is the most famous of all the surrealist games and was invented by Andre Breton and the surrealists in the 1920s. The surrealists were a group of artists and poets who loved breaking the rules of art and finding new ways to look at the world.

Exquisite corpse is a method by which a collection of words or images is collectively assembled. Each collaborator adds to a composition in sequence, either by following a rule, or by being allowed to see only the end of what the previous person contributed.

Exquisite (adjective)

Early 15c., "carefully selected," from Latin *exquisitus* "choice," literally "carefully sought out"

Corpse (noun)

Late 13century "body", from Old French *cors* "body; person; corpse; life."

FOLDING STORY BASED ON THE EXQUISITE CORPSE

Exquisite corpse is a method by which a collection of words is collectively assembled. Each collaborator adds to a composition in sequence, either by following a rule, or by being allowed to see only the end of what the previous person contributed.

The instructions provide outline details for writing a narrative, but it could also be used for writing a poem. If writing a narrative, students will write a beginning, middle (with a complication) and an ending (with a resolution). Students will work in groups of three to create their folding story, using the following steps.

How to:

1. Fold an A4 piece of paper into three equal parts.
2. The first person begins writing the beginning of the story on the first section of the paper. The **last word** they are going to write should be written onto the next section.
3. The second person uses the word that is written as the start of the second section (middle) of the story – it should include a complication. The **last word** they are going to write should be written onto the next section.
4. The third person uses the word that is written as the start of the third section (ending) of the story – it should include a resolution for the story.
5. NOW – SHARE!

Reflect

Reflect on the activity by responding to the following questions:

- What did you enjoy about this investigation?
- What did you find surprising?

Activity: Choose a Project

Individually or in small groups, students will choose one of the following projects to work on and then present their findings to the class.

Write your own ending!

Rewrite the ending of a Roald Dahl Book. Explain why you chose to end it the way you did. Read aloud to the class.

Role model

Choose a character from a Roald Dahl book that you find inspiring. What are their personality traits? Why are they an inspiration to you?

Children's book

Retell one of Roald Dahl's books in the form of a children's picture book.

Letter writing

How do you feel about the changes to Roald Dahl's books? Write a letter to Roald Dahl's publisher explaining your views. Ask any questions you have about the book.

Useful Websites

- [Roald Dahl Book Changes](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [New editions of Roald Dahl books, including Matilda and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, criticised by writers](#) – ABC News
- [Roald Dahl: Why are they rewriting Roald Dahl?](#) – Newsround
- [Roald Dahl Day: Seven fantastic facts about the author](#) – Newsround
- [Roald Dahl dictionary: 10 of our favourite Gobblefunk words](#) – Newsround
- [Roald Dahl Day: Seven fantastic facts about the author](#) – Newsround
- [Roald Dahl Centenary](#) – BTN



Teacher Resource

Future of Letter Writing

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. Why are fewer letters being delivered these days?
2. What changes is Australia Post proposing?
3. The average Australian household receives just over one letter a week. True or false?
4. Who owns Australia Post?
5. Make some predictions about how the postal system might change in the future.

Activity: Note taking

Students will practise their note-taking skills while watching the BTN Future of Letter Writing story. After watching the story, ask students to reflect on and organise the information into three categories. What information in the story was positive, negative, or interesting?



Activity: Class Discussion

Watch the BTN Future of Letter Writing story and use the following questions as a guide to discuss the topic:

- Why is Australia Post reconsidering delivering letters 5 days a week?
- Why are people sending fewer letters in the post?
- What are the different ways that you communicate with friends and family? What types of technologies do you use?
- Have you ever written a letter and posted it? Explain your answer.
- Have you ever received a handwritten letter in the post?
- Who would you like to send a letter to? Why?



EPISODE 4

28th February 2023

KEY LEARNING

Students investigate how technology has changed the way we communicate and will practise writing a letter. They will also examine the difference between formal and informal letters.

CURRICULUM

English – Year 5

Understand how texts vary in purpose, structure and topic as well as the degree of formality.

English – Year 6

Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text.

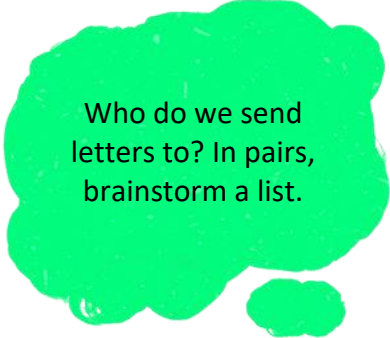
English – Year 6

Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text.

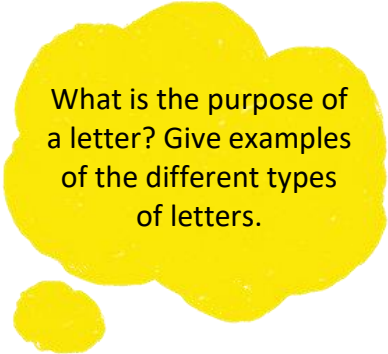
Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience.

Re-read and edit students' own and others' work using agreed criteria and explaining editing choices.

Activity: Letter Writing



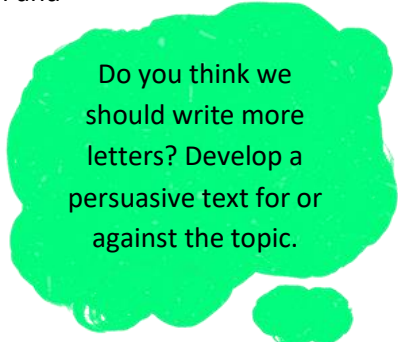
Who do we send letters to? In pairs, brainstorm a list.



What is the purpose of a letter? Give examples of the different types of letters.

Students will practise the art of letter writing. Below are some letter writing activities.

- Who would you like to send a letter to? Why? Students will design and create their own letter head or writing paper and write a letter to someone using their paper.
- Make a time capsule which includes a collection of letters handwritten by your students. Students can write to future students at the school telling them what school is like for them and then make a prediction about what school will be like in the future.
- Connect with a class from another country and ask if they would like to become pen pals with your class. Students will tell them what school life is like in Australia and then find out how their school life is similar or different.
- Students will explore an issue that is important to their school community. Students will then write a letter to their local council or member of parliament voicing their concerns and/or asking for change.
- Students will interview a friend or relative about letters they wrote (or still write).



Do you think we should write more letters? Develop a persuasive text for or against the topic.

Activity: Questions to Research

Students will choose one of the questions below to explore in more detail.

- What are the different parts or features of a letter? For example, date, postal address, greeting, signature.
- What type of language would you use in an informal letter to a friend or relative? Compare the language used in an informal letter to the language used in a formal letter. Give examples.
- Why are letters useful primary sources? Investigate how letters can tell us about the writer's opinions and personality and tell us more about the past. Choose an important letter in history to interpret and then explain your findings to the class. Here are [some examples](#)
- How has technology changed the way we communicate?
- What are the differences and similarities between handwritten and digital letters. When would you hand write a letter? When would you send an email instead of a handwritten letter.
- What is meant by the term 'the art of handwritten letters is dying'? Explain using your own words.
- What is the future of 'snail mail'? Make some predictions about the postal mail system 20 years from now.

Activity: Formal and Informal Letters

When you're writing formal or informal letters or emails, what should you include in it?

Students will watch the following Everyday English videos to learn more.

Formal letters

Watch the video and respond to the following questions:

- Give 3 examples of people you would send a formal letter or email to.
- When might you need to write a formal letter or email?
- Write a short formal letter or email using the tips that Sarah and Jack talk about in the video.



Informal letters

Watch the video and respond to the following questions:

- Give 3 examples of people you would send an informal letter or email to.
- What sort of language do you use when you're writing an informal letter or email?
- Write a short informal letter or email using the tips that Sarah and Jack talk about in the video.



Useful Websites

- [Australia Post says five-day-a-week letter delivery should be reconsidered after \\$200m loss](#) – ABC News
- [Dead Letters](#) – BTN
- [Snail Mail](#) – BTN



Teacher Resource

BTN Transcript: Episode 4- 28/2/2023

Hey, what's up? I'm Amelia Moseley and you're watching BTN. Thanks for hanging out with us again. Let's see what's coming up on today's show. We find out why these classic kids' books are changing, what you can do to protect yourself from mozzies and are letters dying out?

Russian Nuclear Treaty

Reporter: Michelle Wakim

INTRO: All that soon, but first Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced his country will suspend its nuclear treaty with the US. It comes a year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Michelle found out about the history of nuclear treaties and what might happen next.

Last week, in front of top politicians and military leaders, and on screens all around the world, Russia's President Vladimir Putin spoke for a very long time. Almost two hours, actually. It was his first big speech to parliament since Russia invaded Ukraine a year ago.

MALCOLM DAVIS, SENIOR DEFENCE ANALYST: I listened to the entire speech, it was just rambling nonsense.

SHASHANK JOSHI, DEFENCE EDITOR AT THE ECONOMIST: As someone who was watching that speech closely, it was considerably less dramatic than I thought it might be.

In it, he blamed the West for the war in Ukraine, and he announced that Russia would put a hold on an agreement they made with the US about nuclear weapons. This got a lot of people talking. Between them, Russia and the US own around 90 percent of all nuclear weapons on earth. Everyone started to get pretty worried about nuclear weapons in 1945, after the US dropped nuclear bombs on Japan, leaving devastating long-term impacts on the country and effectively ending the Second World War.

Over the next few years, the Soviet Union, which included what we now know as Russia, and the US were racing to develop nuclear weapons, and both started to build up quite a collection. It all kind of came to a head in 1962, when the US and Soviet Union found themselves in a 13-day nuclear standoff, known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. You see the US had tried, and failed, to overthrow Cuba's government. Cuba then went to the Soviet Union for help, and a whole lot of nuclear missiles were sent to Cuba with the very real threat of them being fired at the US.

JOHN F. KENNEDY, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: The Soviet missile bases in Cuba are being dismantled.

Negotiation, and maybe a bit of luck, meant this never turned into a nuclear war, but getting that close scared both the US and the Soviet Union. So, a year later, everyone decided to get together and sign the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which banned the testing of nuclear weapons under water, in the atmosphere, and outer space.

JOHN F. KENNEDY, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I now declare that the United States does not propose to conduct nuclear tests in the atmosphere.

And, over the next few decades, came more treaties.

NEWS READER: The two presidents signed with pens made from melted down missiles, scrapped under a separate treaty four years ago.

GEORGE H. W. BUSH, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We sign the START Treaty as testament to the new relationship.

And more treaties. Each one changed to try and put more restrictions on nuclear weapons. Leaders all around the world agreed they didn't want a nuclear war, because it would cause so much damage and destruction. So, does Putin putting this treaty on hold mean there's a chance of a nuclear war?

VLADIMIR PUTIN, PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA: Let me repeat. Russia does not abandon the treaty but suspends its participation.

A lot of experts say no. No way.

KIRILL NOURZHANOV, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY: What Putin said does not indicate at all that nuclear weapons will be used. He is fully aware of the horrific consequences.

They think it's a strategy to try and scare the US into not helping Ukraine.

DR. BENJAMIN ZALA, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY: The war in Ukraine is going very badly for Russia. And he doesn't have many levers to pull, he hasn't got much leverage. And he's looking for other ways to try and pressure the United States into backing off over this conflict.

But, the US doesn't look like it will be going anywhere.

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Freedom is priceless. It's worth fighting for, for as long as it takes, and that's how long we are going to be with you Mr President. For as long as it takes.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY, PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE: We'll do it.

News Quiz

It was an absolutely massive weekend in Sydney. The city's playing host to World Pride, a global LGBT+ festival which kicked off on Friday with some huge performances. Then on Saturday hundreds of thousands of people gathered for the annual Mardi Gras parade. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese marched in the parade. Why was the PM's participation notable? 2023 is the first time a sitting prime minister has marched in the Mardi Gras parade.

ANTHONY ALBANESE, PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA: It's unfortunate that I am the first, but this is a celebration of modern Australia.

Australia's two biggest supermarkets, Coles, and Woolworths have just offered to doing something about soft plastics. What are the supermarkets doing? Are they removing all soft plastics from their products, recycling all soft plastics, or storing soft plastics? (Storing soft plastics) They've offered to take responsibility for the thousands of tonnes of soft plastic that company REDcycle can no longer afford to recycle.

The European Space Agency has unveiled this new space telescope. What's the telescope going to be used for? Is it looking for aliens, looking for dark matter or looking for nearby planets? The telescope has a special job. Scan the skies for invisible dark matter. But what is dark matter?

ALEXANDER SHORT, EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY: The universe is expanding faster and faster, so something is causing it to expand faster and faster. So, there's a lot of energy that we can't see, and we can't explain, and we call that dark energy. So, cosmology is exciting at the moment. We have dark matter, dark energy. 95 percent of everything out there we can't really explain. The cosmological models don't quite work.

The ESA hopes this new telescope will give us some answers to our dark matter questions by photographing galaxies as far as 10 billion light years away.

Who will represent Australia at the Eurovision Song Contest? Is it Voyager, Jessica Mauboy or Guy Sebastian? Perth synth-metal group Voyager will head to the big stage in May to battle it out with its song "Promise". It's the first time a band will represent Australia at the comp. This year, Liverpool in the UK will host on behalf of last year's winners Ukraine.

Roald Dahl Changes

Reporter: Cale Matthews

INTRO: New editions of some of Roald Dahl's most famous books include some interesting changes. A few words and phrases have been tweaked to make them more acceptable to today's readers. But not everyone's happy about it including a few famous authors and even some young fans. Take a look.

KID READING: The picture showed a 9-year-old boy who was enormously fat, he looked as though he had been blown up with a powerful pump.

KID READING: I have 8 coconuts, 8 monkey nuts and 8 nutty little idiots like you.

KID READING: Aunt sponge was terrifically fat and tremendously flabby at that.

CALE, REPORTER: She was above all a most formidable female. Did you notice anything wrong with the sentences you just heard? Well, they are just some of the phrases from a bunch of Roald Dahl's most famous works that are getting a literary makeover.

From now on Oompa Loompa's aren't small men, instead small people. Augustus Gloop is simply enormous, and Mrs Twit isn't ugly and beastly, she's merely just beastly.

CALE: So, here's the sitch, Puffin Books, the publisher of Roald Dahl's work, hired people called 'sensitivity readers' to, well, read through the books and mark out any words or phrases that they deemed offensive by today's standards.

MICHELLE AS A SENSITIVITY READER: Should it really be a chocolate factory? That doesn't promote healthy eating.

CALE: Michelle isn't one of them, but you get the idea.

The Roald Dahl Story Company, who own the works, say they wanted to ensure that 'Dahl's wonderful stories and characters continue to be enjoyed by all children today' and said it's actually pretty normal to review the language used in old books when publishing new prints. The changes have caused quite a stir. Some people have agreed with them, saying they better reflect who we are today, others not so much. Famous authors said it was absurd censorship or they were alarmed by the changes and even the UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said we shouldn't Gobblefunk around with words. Gobblefunk is a word made up by Roald Dahl.

This certainly isn't the first-time children's books written decades ago have been changed. In 2021 6 books

from Dr Seuss were pulled from publication because they portrayed racial stereotypes, while Enid Blyton's Dame Slap, a teacher who would hit kids, has been modernised to Dame Snap, a teacher who only shouts.

Some people reckon original works just shouldn't be fiddled with, saying authors write for a specific audience at a specific time period, where some words and phrases might have been perfectly acceptable and the words they use can be a good chance to show and teach kids how society has changed. In 2020 Disney added a message at the beginning of some old films warning people of racist stereotypes or outdated ideals within the movie and some think we could do the same for books.

Experts say that children's literature does a whole lot to shape the minds of kids by presenting particular social and cultural values as completely normal and natural. After the backlash, the publishers have now decided to release a collection of Roald Dahl's books with the original text, calling it a 'classics collection'. So, what do you guys think about changing the words?

KID 1: They're actually pretty good because if children read the books they'll use the words to other people.

KID 2: It's good and bad, good as it's more child friendly, bad because Roald Dahl wrote the books so the choice should be his.

KID 3: I think they shouldn't change the words in the book because it's the original writing.

KID 2: On the books they could write like 8+ 5+, according to the words they've used in the book.

KID 4: I think it's important for kids to understand what they mean because as they'll get older they'll probably find out anyway, so I think it would be important to explain to them what it means.

Did You Know?

Did you know Roald Dahl was a fighter pilot? He served with the Royal Air Force and flew Hurricanes in Greece during World War Two.

Mosquito Diseases

Reporter: Cale Matthews

INTRO: After a very wet start to the year health authorities around the country are warning us about the dangers of mosquitoes. Cale found out more including some tips to keep us safe this mozzie season. Check it out.

VAMPIRE CALE: What can I say, I just love blood.

INTERVIEWER OFF CAMERA: Oh blood, do you have that on steak?

VAMPIRE CALE: Oh, oh steak, yes, I love steak, as long as it's not wooden and through my heart.

JOE: Cut, cut, cut. What are you doing?

VAMPIRE CALE: My story? You said do a story on famous bloodsuckers.

JOE: Mosquitoes Cale. I meant mosquitoes.

VAMPIRE CALE: Oh, oh, mosquitoes.

VAMPIRE NAT: Hey, hey, hey. What's cookin' good lookin'?

Personally I think Joe should've been a little clearer with his instructions, but as you and I both just found out this story isn't about vampires, it's about mosquitoes.

NEWS GRAB: This year's floods have also seen a surge in mozzies.

NEWS GRAB: While you're predicting an increase in rain this summer, I'm predicting an increase in mozzies.

NEWS GRAB: This year I am really concerned.

Yep, these annoying little bloodsuckers are out in force this summer.

CALE REPORTER: Which I reckon you probably already knew. What you mightn't know though is just how dangerous these little insects can be.

JOE: Seriously Cale. How do you think I was going to let a vampire...

CALE: What do you want? It took me two hours to put the costume and the makeup on. Why would I take it, I'm a vampire.

Forget about snakes or tigers or sharks. Mosquitoes are the deadliest creatures on the planet responsible for around 725,000 deaths every year. To be fair, it's not the mozzies themselves, they can carry and spread a whole host of different diseases infecting people through their saliva when they bite.

Luckily here in Australia our mosquitoes are pretty disease free but this summer health authorities have been on high alert. See, mosquitoes like it warm and wet and this summer it's been, yeah. Mozzies breed in pools of stagnant or still water and then are most active when it's warm. After a year of heavy rain and floods there's been lots of pools and ponds and puddles and pots of water for mozzies to breed in and a higher number of mozzies means a higher chance for disease.

Earlier this month Victoria recorded its first death in almost 50 years from a disease called Murray Valley encephalitis and around the country there's been cases of all of these mosquito-borne diseases. In South Australia about 100,000 residents of the recently flooded Riverland are eligible for a free vaccine to protect against Japanese encephalitis and every year councils in Victoria do mosquito surveillance where millions of mozzies are caught, sent to a lab and then analysed to see which mosquito borne diseases the community might be at risk of catching.

Health authorities say there's a few things we can do to keep ourselves safe as well, like wear mozzie repellent or use mozzie candles, cover our arms and legs with loose clothing and be aware of pools of water around the house.

CALE: I hope this isn't holy water.

JOE OFF SCREEN: You're not a vampire.

CALE: You're not a vampire.

Future of Letter Writing

Reporter: Lyeba Khan

INTRO: There's been a lot of discussion lately about the death of letter writing. It comes after Australia Post announced its letter service was running at a loss, because fewer Australians are sending and receiving them. Lyeba looked at the history of letters and what their future might look like.

LYEBA, MEDIEVAL POSTPERSON: For hundreds, even thousands of years, people have been exchanging letters. They used it to speak to loved ones far away, send important information, and share whatever the 10th century equivalent was of a meme. Hilarious.

LYEBA, REPORTER: Of course, things have changed. We still occasionally send letters, but most of our communication has been replaced by text and emails and social media. So, where does that leave the postal system?

Australia Post, or AusPost for short, is the company responsible for handling all of the country's mail. It started off as a single postmaster in Sydney in 1809. Fast forward to today, and AusPost is in every part of Australia you can imagine. It's also really busy because people are receiving a lot more parcels now, thanks to online shopping.

DEIDRE WILLMOTT, NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIA POST: We know that letters are declining and we know that parcels are increasing.

LYEBA, REPORTER: The letters we do receive are mostly things like bills, notices from banks and from politicians. Some stuff still has to be sent by mail, such as postal vote materials. But even then, the average Australian household receives just over one letter a week.

And fewer letters means it's getting more and more expensive for Australia Post to send each letter. In fact, in just half a year, the company lost 189 million dollars from it. But because Australia Post is owned by the government, they're the ones who set the rules for what AusPost does. And under current legislation, AusPost has to deliver letters 5 days a week to 98 percent of the population. And they're not allowed to make postage stamps too pricey either. They've recently increased the price of a stamp from a dollar ten to a dollar twenty, but that's not still not enough to cover their costs.

Why is it so expensive for AusPost to deliver letters anyway? Well, Australia is huge and AusPost has to transport letters to every corner of the country. They also need to deliver them within 4 days for the same state and 6 days for interstate letters, which gets costly to do when only a few people are paying to send a letter on that route. Possible options are changing the rules, so letters are delivered only a few days a week, which is what happened during COVID, or for them to focus more on parcel delivery services rather than letters, or for the government to fund the postal service through taxpayer money.

LYEBA, MEDIEVAL POSTPERSON: Whatever the case, let's hope this age-old service stays.

CALE, MEDIEVAL PERSON: Oh, codswallop.

Sport

Australia has won the Women's T20 World Cup with an epic 19-run victory over South Africa in Cape Town.

BETH MOONEY, AUSTRALIAN CRICKETER: We're obviously really pumped; it's been a tough tournament. We've played in conditions we've never played in before and to come out on top we couldn't be happier and couldn't be prouder of this group.

It's the third time in a row Australia's taken the trophy and out of the eight Cups ever played, they've snatched six of them giving them a pretty good rep as the best team in the world.

And talk about setting a high bar, Sweden's Armand Duplantis has broken his own pole vault record, clearing 6.22 metres in the World Athletics Indoor Tour. Wow.

ARMAND DUPLANTIS, POLE VAULTER: It's almost this outer body experience, because it feels almost surreal to be in this situation.

It's the 60th time he's cleared over 6 metres. Wow, that's a lot of 6's. And a lot of reasons to celebrate.

Daniel's Life and Languages

Rookie Reporter: Daniel

INTRO: And finally, today meet Takeover Melbourne winner, Daniel. When he was 3, he was diagnosed as deaf and mute, but he's now fluent in three languages. And you're about to see and hear all of them in this story.

People thought I would not finish primary school, would not learn to speak. I was diagnosed as deaf and mute when I was three. There was not a lot of hope on what I could achieve.

I was born in Saigon, in Vietnam. I remember it being a very dynamite city, busy and colourful. But there were many obstacles. I was judged because of my disability. If it wasn't for my mother's devotion and support, I'm not sure where I'd be today. She knows what it's like to live with a disability, having low vision.

I moved to Australia in 2014. Suddenly, I felt accepted for who I am. I attend a mainstream school and get extra support from a school for the deaf. The two schools even share a campus. After school, I want to be a teacher or a nurse. I want to be out in the community, helping others. Right now, I'm volunteering at a young leader's program for Dandenong Council. We have recently finished organising a youth summit. We are working on a project for LGBTQIA+ young people. I really love these weekly meetings. Everyone here is awesome.

I am proud of my deafness. It's not a burden, but a strength. It inspires me to keep pushing through the expectations others place on me. I am fluent in three languages: Vietnamese, English, and Australian Sign Language. I've proven to myself that nothing can stand in my way.

Closer

Ah, go Daniel. Well, that's all for today, thanks for watching. Don't forget to head to our website to check out BTN High. Our new videos designed exclusively for high school. And you can get a daily dose of news every weeknight at 6.25pm right here in the studio with Newsbreak. Have a great week and I'll see you soon. Bye.