

Writing in the  
***Hyper Real***

English Year 7–10



## Hyper Real: Writing in the Hyper Real English Year 7–10 Education Resource

The National Gallery of Australia's *Hyper Real* exhibition held from 20 October 2017 to 18 February 2018 offers rich material for the 21st-century learner.

**Hyper Real: Writing in the Hyper Real** is a resource that is adaptable for use with a range of year levels. The development of this resource was informed by the Year 7–10 Australian Curriculum for English.

The resource is organised in accordance with skills in the Australian Curriculum for English Years 7–10, which are:

- Visual language
- Vocabulary
- Creating literary texts
- Experimentation and adaptation.

Images of the works of art as well as articles on each of the *Hyper Real* artists are available on the NGA website [nga.gov.au/hyperreal](http://nga.gov.au/hyperreal)

We hope you enjoy the *Hyper Real* exhibition and find the resource a rich stimulus for discussion and artmaking activities.

We invite you to share your *Hyper Real* writing with us by emailing student work to [education@nga.gov.au](mailto:education@nga.gov.au)

(cover) **Patricia Piccinini** *Bootflower and Meadow* 2015, silicone, fibreglass, human hair Collection of Detached Cultural Organisation, Hobart, Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco

**Patricia Piccinini** *Eulogy* 2011 silicone, fibreglass, human hair, clothing National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Warwick and Jane Flecknoe Bequest Fund, 2015, Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco

### NGA Education

NGA Education offer tours of our major exhibitions, including *Hyper Real*, free of charge to booked groups of Australian students and their teachers. We simply ask that you book four weeks prior to your visit.

Further information on the NGA Education program, including opportunities to engage in onsite programs, curriculum-aligned resources and information on professional learning for teachers, can be found on the NGA website at [nga.gov.au/education](http://nga.gov.au/education)



**Visual language:** *How images work in texts to communicate meanings, especially in conjunction with other elements such as print and sound*

**Activity 1: See, think, wonder**

- What do you see?
- What does this work make you think about?
- What does this work make you wonder?

This process of thinking about a work of art will help students to observe and interpret and help incite curiosity and inquiry.

**Example**

SEE	THINK	WONDER
<i>I see a man's head and shoulders poking out of cardboard boxes.</i>	<i>It makes me think about sleeping rough and what that might feel like.</i>	<i>I wonder why the artist chose to place the boxes into a long curved shape?</i>

Try this exercise yourself by adding to the above chart referring to Peter Land's *Back to square one* 2015 and Tony Matelli's *Josh* 2011.

SEE	THINK	WONDER

**Peter Land** *Back to square one* 2015, silicone, human hair, fabric, cardboard, leather, Courtesy of Galleri Nicolai Wallner and Peter Land

**Tony Matelli** *Josh* 2010, silicone, steel, hair, urethane, clothing, Collection of the artist





## Activity 2: Descriptive writing

Write a short passage (100–150 words) about a chosen work from the exhibition. The purpose of descriptive writing is to create a visual in the reader's mind.

In your writing use a combination of the following elements:

- Sensory details: sight, smell, sound and touch.
- Figurative language: analogies, similes and metaphors.
- Precise language: carefully chosen adjectives, adverbs, nouns etc.
- Structure: begin with physical description, then how the figure thinks, feels and acts.

### Example:

*Her big toes point slightly outward and upward. She has bare feet and her toes are pressed firmly on the ground though she sits with her knees tucked up to her chest and held in by her forearms. Her skin is rough, and on her feet slightly translucent allowing for the veins to show blue against her otherwise pale skin. She looks as if the world weighs heavily on her shoulders. The grey jumper is pulled up over her head, a shelter against the harshness of the world. The fingers of one hand are curled in, but unlike a fist she rests upon it, pondering. Her face says it all, 'I'm too tired for all of this.' Her downcast eyes—open but lids pressing down—are suggestive of despair.*



**Marc Sijan** *Embrace* 2014, polyester resin, oil paint, Collection of the artist, © Marc Sijan  
Image courtesy of the artist and Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

**Vocabulary:** Meanings of words including every day and specialist meanings and how words take their meanings from the context of the text

### Activity 1: Extend your vocabulary

Find the definition of three of the following words, include them in a sentence and find an image to represent each of them:

- Posthumanism
- Clone
- Cyborg
- Mundane
- Hybrid
- Mutated
- Surreal
- Uncanny
- Sublime
- Metamorphoses.

As an extension, read through the articles accompanying the artists' entries on the NGA website. Note down any unfamiliar words and look up their meaning.

**Patricia Piccinini** *Bootflower and Meadow* 2015, silicone, fibreglass, human hair, Collection of Detached Cultural Organisation, Hobart, Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco

### Activity 2: Translate titles

A few of the titles for works of art in *Hyper Real* come from languages other than English. Through online research try to identify the language and the translation of the following titles:

- Shaune Gladwell Orbital Vanitas 2017
- AES+F Inverso Mundus 2015.

Once you have researched the titles and what they mean make a prediction of what these works might be about.

### Activity 3: Collect adjectives

As a class, brainstorm adjectives you would use to describe Patricia Piccinini's work *Bootflower* and *Meadow* 2015.

Once you have compiled as many as you can, use a thesaurus to find synonyms for the words you have gathered.

Check whether these synonyms are suitable by finding their definitions and having a discussion as a class. You may find that not all synonyms are appropriate, as words have specific meanings in particular contexts.



**Creating literary texts:** *Creating their own literary texts based on the ideas, features and structures of texts experienced*

### **Activity 1: Write a fantasy short story**

Use the above images to inspire a short story. You may like to start from scratch or continue the story starter we have developed, 'An unlikely friendship', found later on this entry.

Brainstorm: Jot down ideas you have under the following headings: character, setting, situation and vocabulary.

Write: Imagine you are one of the characters in the work of art. Adopt their voice to write a first person narrative from their point of view.

### **Consider:**

- An attention grabbing opener to your story, perhaps by starting in the action.
- How you can use specific detail and language choices to help the reader understand the order of events.
- How description and dialogue develop your character and setting.
- Showing rather than telling.

### **An unlikely friendship**

*'Creak'. I hear the door in the hallway opening.*

*'Quick, hide!'*

*'Were you talking to me darling?'*

*'No mummy, it's fine!'*

*Mum comes through the door and her eyes are glassy and shiny. She is frowning at me as if she feels sorry for me. Mum is always worrying. She used to let my brothers go down to the shops to get milk or eggs or occasionally in summer an icecream but she won't let me do that sort of stuff on my own anymore. Ever since my brothers left she's been very worried about me.*

*I look across at the wardrobe and notice a thin greenish-blue feather poking out from beneath. 'Quick', I think to myself, 'think of something to tell mummy that will stop her from looking at the wardrobe!'*

*'Mum!' I say '...'*



**Patricia Piccinini** *The welcome guest* 2011, silicone, fibreglass, human hair, clothing, taxidermied peacocks, Collection of the artist, Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco

## Activity 2: Investigate Patricia Piccinini's fantastical creatures

Some of the characters in Patricia Piccinini's sculptures are fantastic creatures.

In fantasy writing there are a number of commonly used fantastic creatures. Can you think of some? What are they?

Delve deeper into why Piccinini chose to create her own fantasy creatures, particularly in *The welcome guest* 2011 and *The long awaited* 2008.

As a class discuss your interpretations.

### Consider:

- What are the features or characteristics of these creatures that are familiar?
- Do they look like any other creatures?
- Why might Piccinini have paired human and non-human characters in these works?
- What might Piccinini be trying to say through these works?
- What story do the sculptures tell?

After this discussion compare your ideas and interpretations with Patricia Piccinini's by reading the following artist's statements.

[The long awaited 2008 patriciapiccinini.net/writing/41/232/29](http://patriciapiccinini.net/writing/41/232/29)

[The welcome guest 2011 patriciapiccinini.net/writing/43/232/29](http://patriciapiccinini.net/writing/43/232/29)

After you have read these statements consolidate your ideas to reflect on what you may have learnt from Piccinini's works.

### Consider:

- How has your idea of the sculpture changed?
- Does knowing Piccinini's reasoning make the sculptures more powerful in any way?
- What stands out most to you now about these works?

**Patricia Piccinini** *The long awaited* 2008, silicone, fibreglass, human hair, plywood, leather, clothing, Collection of Detached Cultural Organisation, Hobart, Courtesy of the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco





### Activity 3: Write a monologue

A monologue is an uninterrupted speech by a single character on stage. Its function is to express the individual's thought process aloud.

For this task imagine that you are taking on the character of one of the sculptures within the exhibition.

#### Consider:

- Voice: How would the character speak?
- Ideas: How could the monologue explore or reveal information about them that would be interesting to the audience?

#### Example:

*(The sound of a tile breaking) Well. Well well well. Here we are. Where ARE we?*

*Ahh. (grunts) Nngh. Well, at least it's bigger. A there's a bit of room to stretch. (grunts) Ngh.*

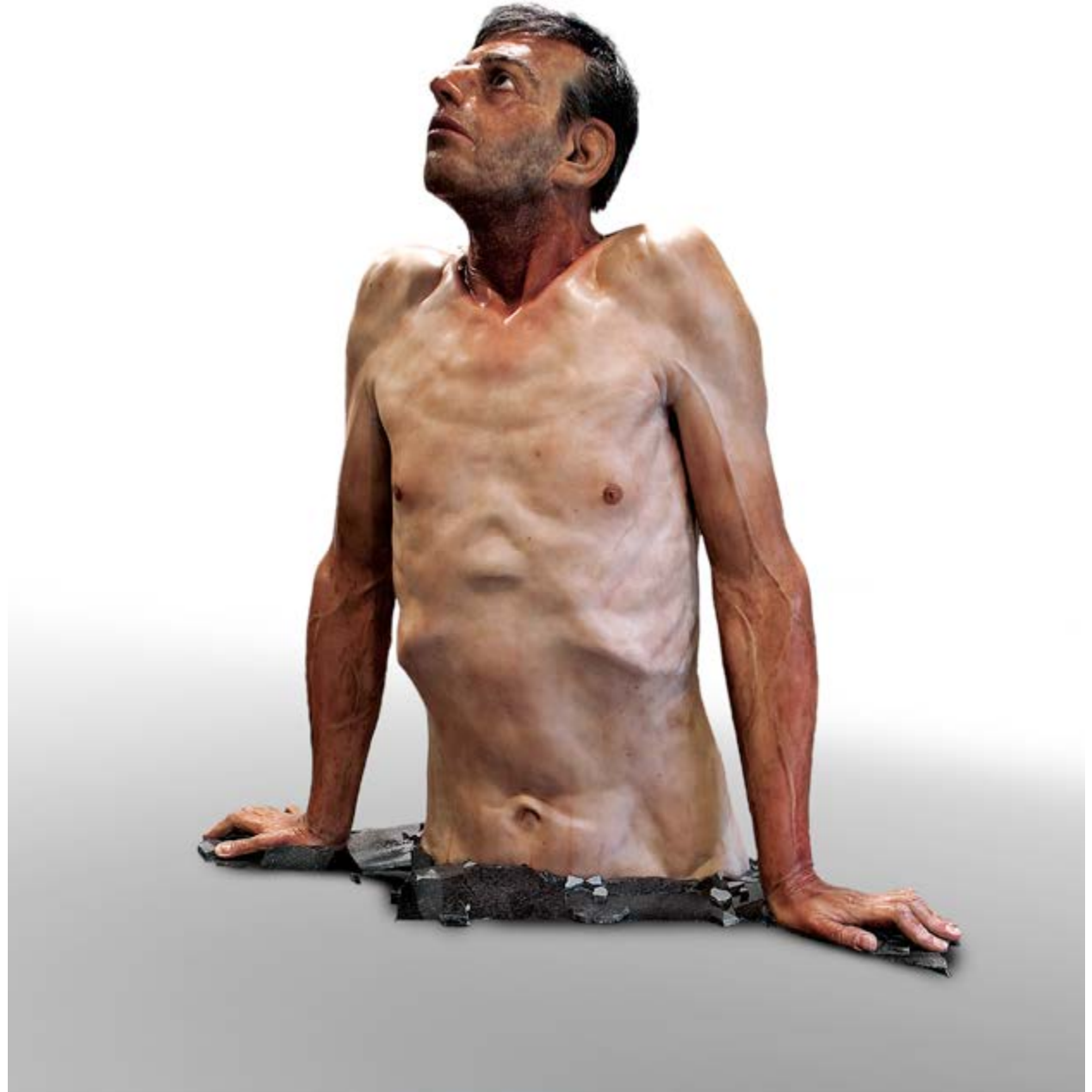
*A lot of the time, you just plod along from one day to the next, but every once in a while you look up and think, I wonder what it's like up THERE?*

*Is it cold? How does it smell?*

*And one day, your curiosity gets the better of you. You go there.*

*(amused) With a little effort—ngh!—there's a breakthrough. You're in a new place. You take a look around, get your bearings, get comfortable, and then you look ... up and wonder: What's through THERE?*

**Zharko Basheski** *Ordinary man* 2009–10, polyester resin, fiberglass, silicone, hair, Collection of the artist





#### Activity 4: Perform your monologue

In your monologue you should:

- Use first person.
- Be dramatic or comedic in your delivery.
- Reveal what you *want* people to know about your character.
- Aim to contract your performance to two minutes length.

Characterisation is achieved through detail.

Sometimes when we think about characterisation we consider the difference between what are called flat and round characters.

A flat character is one lacking in depth or complexity. Try to develop round characters, which may mean showing us how they think, feel, act as well as revealing their motivations and desires.

The details are crucial. Perhaps they will share a secret, maybe a memory, or even define a relationship they have with another sculpture.

Whatever detail you share should be *memorable*.

Consider:

- Are your character's wants clear even if they are not said directly?
- What is at stake for this character?
- Is the audience engaged?

Your teacher may ask students in the class to give constructive feedback on the performances, including what worked well and what could be improved next time.



**Sam Jinks** *Woman and child* 2010 (detail), silicone, pigment, resin, silk, human hair, Collection of the artist, © Sam Jinks, Image courtesy of the artist, Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney and Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

**Experimentation and adaptation:** *Creating a variety of texts, including multimodal texts, adapting ideas and devices from literary texts*

### Activity 1: Sci-fi study

Science fiction is a genre defined by the question, what if?

What if the world was overrun by robots? What if humans could live forever? What if technology could extend mankind's ability in an extraordinary way? What if the world ended in apocalypse?

Research science fiction and come up with an image and a short explanation in your own words of what you understand the genre to be.

You may like to read some examples or watch trailers of sci-fi films in order to better understand the genre.

### Activity 2: Sci-fi film pitch

The *Hyper Real* exhibition includes the artists AES+F, an artistic collective from Russia, whose work *Inverso Mundus* 2015 creates a 'world upside down', as suggested by a loose translation of the title of the work.

You can view a 6-minute trailer of the work on the artists' website [aesf.art/projects/inverso\\_mundus/](http://aesf.art/projects/inverso_mundus/).

In this exercise imagine that you are pitching for funding to create a sci-fi film of your own about an alternative world. Start by deciding the 'what if' of your film; take a few minutes to write down your ideas.

You are then to come up with a pitch that will convince investors to back your film.

With your teacher's permission share your pitches with the class and vote on which was most effective. To be convincing you will need to develop your pitch in a way that demonstrates originality.

### Consider:

- Your big idea
- Characters
- Setting
- Plot
- Techniques that you will use in the making of the film.



AES+F *Inverso mundus* 2015, seven-channel HD video installation: 38:20 minutes, sound, colour, Courtesy of the artists, MAMM, Anna Schwartz Gallery and Triumph Gallery

### Activity 3: Prepare for an art debate

Mark Quinn's *Self* 2011 is part of a series of works in which the artist creates a self-portrait using his own blood as the primary material.

The process he used to make these works is documented on his website: [marcquinn.com/studio/studio-diaries/the-making-of-self](http://marcquinn.com/studio/studio-diaries/the-making-of-self)

The work inevitably shocks some viewers. This may be due to the visceral quality of being able to see blood. The strategy of the uncanny, of disrupting the viewer's expectations, is used by other contemporary artists and is also seen in horror films. The power of this tactic is that it disrupts the viewer's expectations and moves them to respond in an unexpected fashion.

It is not necessarily the artists' intention to incite a reaction of shock or disgust in the viewer. Instead, Quinn speaks about drawing the viewer's attention to a specific point in time, achieved by literally freezing part of his own body at a precise moment.

Deepen your understanding of contemporary art by investigating the following artists who have also employed provocative materials or strategies to incite a reaction from the viewer:

[Mike Parr \*Social Gestus No. 5 \(the "Arm Chop"\)\* 1977](#)

[Damien Hirst \*The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living\* 1991](#)

[Yoko Ono \*Cut Piece\* 1964](#)

### Consider:

- How does the quality of shock affect the viewer?
- What else do people find confronting about this work?
- What happens psychologically when we experience shock?

### Activity 4: Hold an art debate

Label the four corners of the room: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The teacher should read out one controversial statement at a time and allow students to move to the appropriate corner of the room.

The teacher should then call upon students in different corners to share their opinion. It is important that students try to justify their opinion, either with an example or a reason.

Students in other corners of the room can then respond by agreeing with or rebutting each other's points.

This should be a respectful debate. There are naturally going to be divergent opinions in the room and it is important that no one is made to feel unsafe or uncomfortable to share their ideas. To avoid making the debate seem personal focus on the strength and validity of arguments made.

### Suggested statements:

- *Blood should never be used as a material for a work of art*
- *The true self can only be captured by one's self*
- *Contemporary art has gone too far. Art has become more about spectacle and controversy than a serious cultural practice*
- *Art is desensitising the world to actual horrors*
- *There is a reason for everything*
- *Death is only the beginning for an artist*



**Marc Quinn** *Self* 2011, blood (artist's), liquid silicone, stainless steel, glass, acrylic, refrigeration equipment, Collection of the artist, Image courtesy Marc Quinn Studio. Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates



## Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum identifies that all students should be developing general capabilities in the areas of **ethical and intercultural understanding** as well as **critical and creative thinking** across all of their learning areas.

The *Hyper Real* exhibition and the supporting education resources offer opportunities for students to think creatively and critically, consider questions of ethical importance and reflect upon human culture as stimulated by works in the exhibition.

The Melbourne Declaration, a key document in orienting and setting out goals for education in Australia, states in its preamble:

*In the 21st century Australia's capacity to provide a high quality of life for all will depend on the ability to compete in the global economy on knowledge and innovation.*

[MCEETYA, 2008](#)

This document makes it evident that an emphasis on preparing young people for the world of the future is imminent and that the 21st-century skills of thinking creatively and critically will be of crucial importance.

By embedding learning activities within the website and providing this resource online we hope this will lend itself to inquiry learning by students in schools and classrooms with a 'bring your own device' policy and enrich the use of **ICT** in the classroom.

In particular *Writing in the Hyper Real* offers opportunities for the development of selected writing skills in the continuum of the curriculum in Years 7–10.

## English

**Visual language:** *How images work in texts to communicate meanings, especially in conjunction with other elements such as print and sound*

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance	Investigate how visual and multimodal texts allude to or draw on other texts or images to enhance and layer meaning	Analyse and explain the use of symbols, icons and myth in still and moving images and how these augment meaning	Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images
<a href="#">ACELA1764</a>	<a href="#">ACELA1548</a>	<a href="#">ACELA1560</a>	<a href="#">ACELA1572</a>

**Vocabulary:** *Meanings of words including every day and specialist meanings and how words take their meanings from the context of the text*

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Investigate vocabulary typical of extended and more academic texts and the role of abstract nouns, classification, description and generalisation in building specialised knowledge through language	Recognise that vocabulary choices contribute to the specificity, abstraction and style of texts	Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness	Refine vocabulary choices to discriminate between shades of meaning, with deliberate attention to the effect on audiences
<a href="#">ACELA1537</a>	<a href="#">ACELA1547</a>	<a href="#">ACELA1561</a>	<a href="#">ACELA1571</a>

**Creating literary texts:** *Creating their own literary texts based on the ideas, features and structures of texts experienced*

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Create literary texts that adapt stylistic features encountered in other texts, for example, narrative viewpoint, structure of stanzas, contrast and juxtaposition	Create literary texts that draw upon text structures and language features of other texts for particular purposes and effects	Create literary texts, including hybrid texts that innovate on aspects of other texts, for example by using parody, allusion and appropriation	Create literary texts that reflect an emerging sense of personal style and evaluate the effectiveness of these texts
<a href="#">ACELT1625</a>	<a href="#">ACELT1632</a>	<a href="#">ACELT1773</a>	<a href="#">ACELT1814</a>

**Experimentation and adaptation:** *Creating a variety of texts, including multimodal texts, adapting ideas and devices from literary texts*

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using rhythm, sound effects, monologue, layout, navigation and colour	Experiment with particular language features drawn from different types of texts, including combinations of language and visual choices to create new texts	Experiment with the ways that language features, image and sound can be adapted in literary texts, for example the effects of stereotypical characters and settings, the playfulness of humour and pun and the use of hyperlink	Create literary texts with a sustained 'voice', selecting and adapting appropriate text structures, literary devices, language, auditory and visual structures and features for a specific purpose and intended audience
<a href="#">ACELT1625</a>	<a href="#">ACELT1632</a>	<a href="#">ACELT1773</a>	<a href="#">ACELT1814</a>