



## EPISODE 10: 1918: BERTIE

### English: teaching strategies

Unit focus: English

Year level: Years 3–6

#### The Australian curriculum: English

The national English curriculum is based on three interrelated strands:

- **Language:** Knowing about the English language ...
- **Literature:** Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature ...
- **Literacy:** Growing a repertoire of English usage ...

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## **EPISODE CLIP: ON 'TICK'**

### **ACTIVITY 1: MR WATSON**

Subtheme: Character

#### **Discover**

- Briefly discuss the characters introduced in this clip and ask students to deconstruct the character of Mr Watson. Have them read the third draft of the script for this scene and consider: Who is he? What work does he do? How does he dress? What do you think of him? How does he treat Bertie? Discuss their answers. Have students read the script again carefully before writing a character profile of Mr Watson, based on the script.
- If it is not mentioned in the students' responses, draw attention to the exchange at the end of the script extract where Mr Watson is said to 'soften' as he offers the book to Bertie for a 'ha'penny'. As a class, discuss the meaning of the word 'soften' and what it means in this context. Discuss whether this influences the way the audience feels about Mr Watson. Why do you think the filmmaker included this exchange?
- Screen the clip version of the same scene. Long before he refuses him credit, Mr Watson tries to sell Bertie the magician's book. Ask students to note the differences between this version and the script version. Discuss whether the changes would affect the way the audience responds to this character. Does the clip version make Mr Watson more, or less, likeable?

#### **Reflect**

- Ask students why they think the filmmaker may have changed the emphasis in the final version of this scene, removing the 'softening' of Mr Watson. Discuss why the filmmaker might want to make Mr Watson a more unlikeable character. Why might this be important to the story?

#### **Download**

- Student Activity Sheet E10.1: Understanding Mr Watson

### **ACTIVITY 2: THE UNLIKEABLE CHARACTER**

Subthemes: Character; Language and scripting

#### **Discover**

- As a class, brainstorm a list of unlikeable characters (villains) in literature and films. Some examples are Malfoy in the Harry Potter series or the Ice Queen in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. For each character, give examples of ways in which the filmmaker or author makes the audience dislike the character. As a class, discuss the reasons these characters were created in this way. What is their purpose in the story? What devices have been used to portray these characters as 'unlikeable'?



### **Reflect**

- Have students take the unlikeable character Mr Watson and rewrite this scene, making him a nicer person. Focus their attention on the dialogue and directions for acting needed to convey this message to the audience. Have students present their reworking of the scene to the class.
- Compare the different versions produced by students and discuss the techniques used to change the audience response to Mr Watson.

### **Download**

- Student Activity Sheet E10.2: Making characters likeable or unlikeable

## **ACTIVITY 3: THE HOMELAND EFFORT**

Subthemes: Australians at war; Relationships

### **Discover**

- Prior to viewing the clip, talk with students about the era in which this episode was set. It was the time of the First World War (1914–18). Create a list of their responses and understandings using these headings: Who, What, Where and When. As an extension of this discussion, students could consider what started this war and how war affected the lives of those who fought and those who stayed at home.

### **Reflect**

- Ask students to examine the role women played during the war effort. In this clip we find out that Bertie's mother and his sister Evelyn are nurses. Ask students to list what other roles women took on during the war. Have them examine one of these roles and prepare a profile of a female character who could have existed during this time. Conduct a freeze-frame exercise, in which the teacher walks around the group and taps the shoulder of each student in turn. When they are tapped, they introduce their character, tell their age and occupation and speak in character about a day in their life.

### **Download**

- Student Activity Sheet E10.3: Wartime roles

## **ACTIVITY 4: COLLOQUIALISMS**

Subthemes: Language and scripting

### **Discover**

- In this clip, Bertie asks Mr Watson to advance him credit for the present he is purchasing for his brother Eddie. The conversation between the two reveals many Australian colloquialisms or slang. Other words and phrases commonly used during this time can be heard in the clips 'Impact of war' and 'Armistice'. Ask students to begin a language journal that can be used to record unusual words from the series. Students should write down the words or phrases with their meanings.

### Reflect

- Have students read the script for this clip. After the first reading, ask them to list and discuss the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions in the text. Some possible examples are: 'on tick', 'shillings', 'ha'penny', 'sixpence', 'pound', 'diggers', 'Keep your mitts off', 'do the honours', 'Strewth!', 'The shop is like Merlin's cave', 'Praying for a miracle' and 'wag'. They could also compare the language of characters in this episode to that of characters in the later episodes.
- Bertie goes to the repatriation hospital to see his mother. As they talk Bertie answers a question with 'Yep.' His mother corrects him and refers to herself as 'Mother'. Ask students to discuss why Bertie's mother insisted he use her more formal title and that he use the correct English for 'yes'. Ask them to find the words for 'mother' in at least five different languages and to develop a list of pet names that could refer to their mother, father, grandmother and grandfather.

### Download

- Student Activity Sheet E10.4: Unfamiliar expressions

## EPISODE CLIP: IMPACT OF WAR

### ACTIVITY 5: THE TELEGRAM

#### Subthemes: Inventions and electronic media; Language and scripting

Bertie and Sid rush back to Bertie's house when they hear the bell on the postman's bicycle bell as he delivers a war telegram to Bertie's sister Evelyn. She is devastated by the news of Freddie's death (her friend, neighbour and Miss Miller's nephew). It comes after the family had already received the traumatic news of the death of their father in the war.

### Discover

- After viewing the clip, ask students to describe what is happening in this scene, using evidence from the text to support their explanations. What clues have been given previously that will help the viewer to understand what is happening here? Focus on the opening scene with the telegram boy and discuss what this signals to the viewer. Have students think about how this makes them feel. Ask them to look carefully to find out what the filmmaker is drawing viewers' attention to in this scene, how this is achieved and the possible reasons why.
- It may be necessary to give students some background about telegrams and their critical role in communication in times before it was common for people to have telephones in their homes. It is important to highlight the significance of a telegram received during wartime. Viewers must appreciate this if the scene is to have the intended impact. There may be some students whose grandparents have kept telegrams from the past, for example, wedding telegrams. Look at the format of a telegram. The message was conveyed in as few words as possible, with words such as articles omitted.
- Discuss why telegrams were abbreviated, and find out the cost of sending a telegram. Discuss how telegrams are similar to SMS text messages. What other text formats have replaced the telegram?

### Reflect

- Ask students to use the worksheet to analyse the impact of this clip. List the sounds heard in one column and the vision in the other, and note what they consider to be significant. The audio of the bicycle bell comes first, a piercing noise which precedes the image, immediately focusing attention on the bicycle and the boy. Other factors colouring the tone of this scene are the demeanour of the boy on bicycle and the symbolism of the uniform, both designed to create particular meaning for the viewer.
- Have students look closely at the way this opening scene is edited, with the montage of shots cutting back and forth between Bertie and Sid, and others. Ask students:
  - 1 What is the purpose of this? What is the filmmaker trying to make you feel?
  - 2 How does it make you feel?
  - 3 How does the filmmaker use this technique to help tell the story?

### Download

- Student Activity Sheet E10.5: Delivering news

## ACTIVITY 6: PREJUDICE

### Subthemes: Language and scripting

#### Discover

- Consider how Sid, an Aboriginal soldier, is portrayed in this clip, and discuss the meaning of 'prejudice'. Ask students to suggest some ways in which people can treat others in a prejudiced manner. How does the filmmaker portray the prejudice that Sid encounters, for example, Sid's discomfort at entering the backyard, and Mr Watson's and his daughter's treatment of Sid?
- Think about how Sid and Bertie relate to each other, and then how Mr Watson relates to them. Discuss the differences, and think about the reasons why the filmmaker has portrayed these relationships in this way.

#### Reflect

- Ask students to consider how Sid felt when Mr Watson made him stay outside his shop. What could be the reasons for the difference in Mr Watson's treatment of Sid and Bertie? Use the Student Activity Sheet E10.6 to respond to the questions. Teachers can give students some context about the conditions that Indigenous people returned to after fighting in the First World War. They did not receive the same government benefits as non-Indigenous soldiers and did not even have the right to vote at the time.

#### Download

- Student Activity Sheet E10.6: Sid

## **EPISODE CLIP: ARMISTICE**

### **ACTIVITY 7: THE LUCKY ONE**

Subtheme: Character

#### **Discover**

- As a class discuss Eddie's belief that he is one of the 'lucky' ones. Look at the list of reasons he gives. Have students say if they agree with him. After they have watched this clip, ask students to describe Eddie's personality. They should use evidence from the clip to support any observations.
- Suggest to the class that Eddie is a positive thinker and discuss students' responses to that statement. Have them think about people they know who think positively and always seem to look on the 'bright side'.

#### **Reflect**

- In small groups, create a list of pros and cons about being a positive thinker. Share and discuss the lists with the rest of the class. Students can research the benefits of positive thinking in building resilience and interview someone they know who is a positive thinker to get tips on how to do it. Create a hot seat role-play where students pretend to be a character from the episode. They are asked questions by the class about their life, likes, dislikes, attitude to work and their aspirations for the future.
- Have students think forward ten years and write a description of how Eddie's life has turned out. What do they think will happen to him and do they think he will do well in life?

#### **Download**

- Student Activity Sheet E10.7: Eddie

### **ACTIVITY 8: ACROSS THE DECADES**

Subtheme: Relationships

This activity applies to the complete episode instead of an individual clip.

#### **Discover**

- This is one of the episodes in the *My Place* series in which the family and main characters appear in consecutive episodes. If possible, before watching this episode screen Episode 11: 1908: Evelyn, which sees some of these characters as children ten years earlier.

#### **Reflect**

- In the related learning activities for Episode 11: 1908: Evelyn, students could write a description of each of the three main characters This episode was about Evelyn, her younger brother Eddie and their next-door neighbour Freddie Miller . Students could make predictions about what each of their lives might be like in ten years time and explain why they think this.
- Revisit these predictions following the viewing of Episode 10: 1918: Bertie. Discuss what happened to the characters and how students feel about this.

## ACTIVITY 9: CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

Subthemes: Australians at war; Character

The activities and worksheet relate to the complete episode instead of an individual clip.

### Discover

- List the main characters in the episode and discuss how they are each directly affected by the war. For example:
  - 1 Mother: her husband was killed in the war; her son is an injured soldier; she is working as a nurse
  - 2 Bertie: father was killed in the war; his brother is injured
  - 3 Sid: lost his eye in the war
  - 4 Evelyn: her father and her friend Freddie Miller are killed; her brother is injured; she is working as a nurse
  - 5 Miss Miller: her brother and her nephew were killed in the war
  - 6 Eddie: lost his leg in the war; his father was killed.
- Arrange a visit to the local war memorial to enhance understanding and to encourage further investigation and discussion on this topic.

### Reflect

- Have students write a report describing the impact of the war on this small neighbourhood, relating the stories of some of the characters and considering how they might feel about all that has happened to them. Conclude with a statement giving their own opinion of the impact of war.

### Download

- Student Activity Sheet E10.8: The effects of war

## ACTIVITY 10: SYMBOLS

Subthemes: Australians at war; Beliefs

- The activities and worksheet relate to the complete episode instead of an individual clip.

### Discover

- Ask students to consider what objects are important throughout the episode. Some objects that appear at different times are the glass eyes, the rabbit, the camel key ring and the prosthetic legs. Discuss how these objects seem to be in the background at the beginning of the episode but become more important as the story unfolds. Ask students why they think the filmmaker has done this. What impact might these symbols have on the viewer and what would the episode be like if they were removed? How important do they think symbols like this are?
- Watch again the scene in the clip 'On "tick"' where Bertie goes into Mr Watson's shop. Look closely for the introduction of these symbols. What are the background objects that the filmmaker makes sure we see and how is this achieved? Two examples are the glass eyes and the prosthetic legs. The rabbit also becomes an object of some significance in the story, along with

the magic book. The shop was described as being like Merlin's cave. Who was Merlin? What link does he have to this story?

- As the episode continues, look carefully to see how these objects become more significant. Ask students: What is the glass eye leading to in the story? Why is there a focus on the rabbit in this early scene? How does the rabbit help to establish the story and add depth to the production?

### Reflect

- Ask students to explore the following questions:
- Why does the filmmaker keep Bertie's present for Eddie a secret until the end of the film?
- Think about the concept of dramatic tension. How does the 'secret' help build dramatic tension in the story as the viewer is kept wondering. Look at the clues that lead to the final revelation when Bertie discovers Eddie has lost a leg.
- Have students think about and identify the point in the story when all the elements finally come together for them. Explain why this happened.

### Download

- Student Activity Sheet E10.9: Significant objects

## ACTIVITY 11: CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

### Subthemes: Australians at war; Customs and traditions

This activity relates to the complete episode instead of an individual clip.

### Discover

- Ask students to consider the First World War from the perspective of a young conscientious objector who refused to train as a soldier. View 'Boy Soldiers' from the Australian Children's Television Foundation *More Winners* series. This telemovie is set during the same period, but is based on the atmosphere surrounding the conscription issue in Australia in 1914. A 1910 law required all boys aged between 14 and 17 years to register for military training. Subsequently, between 1911 and 1915 over 30,000 Australian boys were prosecuted for not obeying this law.

### Reflect

- 'Boy soldiers' is a film in the *More Winners* series. Two sets of related teaching and learning activities can be found at the Australian Children's Television Foundation website Learning Centre. Have students complete both sets of activities.

'Boy soldiers',

[http://www.actf.com.au/learning\\_centre/school\\_resources/productions/win/lesson\\_plans/boy\\_soldiers.htm](http://www.actf.com.au/learning_centre/school_resources/productions/win/lesson_plans/boy_soldiers.htm)

'Boy soldiers B',

[http://www.actf.com.au/learning\\_centre/school\\_resources/productions/win/lesson\\_plans/boy\\_soldiersb.htm](http://www.actf.com.au/learning_centre/school_resources/productions/win/lesson_plans/boy_soldiersb.htm)



## Aligned resources

Crew, Gary, Tan, Shaun (ill.) 2003, *Memorial*, Lothian Books, Port Melbourne.

French, Jackie 2008, *A Rose for the Anzac Boys*, Angus and Robertson. Sydney. This is a novel for adolescents set in the First World War. It comprises letters to soldiers and describes the voluntary work of teenage students at canteens in railway stations.

Jorgenson, Norman, Harrison-Lever, Brian (ill.) 2004, *In Flanders fields*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle.

Lewis, CS 2002, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, HarperCollins, Melbourne.

Riddle, Tohby 2005, *Irving the Magician*, Penguin Australia, Melbourne.

Rowling, JK 1999, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Bloomsbury, London. Other books in the series can also be used.

Australian Children's Television Foundation, *More Winners* series, 'Boy soldiers',

[http://www.actf.com.au/learning\\_centre/school\\_resources/productions/win/lesson\\_plans/boy\\_soldiers.htm](http://www.actf.com.au/learning_centre/school_resources/productions/win/lesson_plans/boy_soldiers.htm)

—'Boy soldiers B',

[http://www.actf.com.au/learning\\_centre/school\\_resources/productions/win/lesson\\_plans/boy\\_soldiers\\_b.htm](http://www.actf.com.au/learning_centre/school_resources/productions/win/lesson_plans/boy_soldiers_b.htm)

australianscreen, <http://aso.gov.au/titles/tv/more-winners-boy-soldiers>



## Understanding Mr Watson

1 Construct a character profile of Mr Watson.

a Who he is?

\_\_\_\_\_

b What work does he do?

\_\_\_\_\_

c How does he dress?

\_\_\_\_\_

d How does he treat Bertie?

\_\_\_\_\_

e What do you think of him?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Read the script (below) and complete the following:

I think the filmmaker wants us to see Mr Watson as a \_\_\_\_\_ person because of the way he is presented in this script. For example:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I think Mr Watson is a likeable/unlikeable character because

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 Why do you think the filmmaker wanted to make Mr Watson a more unlikeable character? Why might this be important to the story?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Interior. The shop – The Watson's house. Morning**

Edna stares at him uncertainly.

EDNA

You're a looney.

She gathers up Charles and retreats out the back.

Alone at last, BERT picks up a faded booklet, *The Young Magician's Handbook*. From the moment he opens it he is mesmerised: black-and-white pen illustrations show a man with oiled hair in a dinner suit performing such feats as sawing a lady in half and making playing cards disappear.

MR WATSON

Would you like to buy that?

Mr Watson has appeared behind the counter ... as if by magic. He's slightly exotic and vaguely sinister in his dark dressing gown and smoking cap. Bertie hurriedly puts the book on the counter.

BERT

Oh, no, thanks, Mr Watson. I – I got some money ...

MR WATSON

We're closed today, Bertie.

BERT

I know, but ... um – Eddie, my brother's coming home on Monday; his ship is early, so ... I got to get his present.

MR WATSON

Ah.

BERT digs out his handful of coins. Mr Watson sorts them on the counter.

MR WATSON

Nine shillings ... and sixpence. (Producing a ledger from under the counter) I'm afraid that might not –

BERT

Mr Watson, could I ... ? Could we put the rest on tick?

MR WATSON

On tick?

BERT

There's nine and six there, Mr Watson. I got ten shillings down already so ... that's only one and six to go.

MR WATSON

Bertie, I'm afraid –

BERT

It's only one and six, Mr Watson! It's in a good cause. I'd pay it off, I swear.

MR WATSON

That's as may be, but I can only advance credit to a responsible adult.

BERT

But I give you almost a pound already, Mr Watson. It's a coming-home present for a digger!

MR WATSON

I know that, Bertie, but those are the rules. I'm sorry.

Bert stares at him miserably. Mr Watson **softens**. He slides *The Young Magician's Handbook* towards him.

MR WATSON

Tell you what: this is missing a few pages, so ... why don't I let you have it for a ha'penny, eh?

He looks at Bert encouragingly. Bert looks down and shakes his head

BERT

Thanks, Mr Watson. Could you put that all down for me, anyway?

Bert heads out.

MR WATSON

I will, Bert. I'm sorry I can't help you.

From the third draft of the script for Episode 10: 1918: Bertie





## Wartime roles

- 1 Research information about the First World War. Consider what started the war and how it affected the lives of those who fought and those who stayed at home.

a When?

\_\_\_\_\_

b Where?

\_\_\_\_\_

c Who?

\_\_\_\_\_

d What?

\_\_\_\_\_

e The impact of war on the lives of people who stayed at home.

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2 To prepare for a freeze-frame exercise, examine the role women played during the war effort. In this clip we find out that Bertie's mother and his sister Evelyn are nurses. List other roles women took on during the war. Examine one of these roles and prepare a character profile about this person.

### Roles of women during the First World War

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A freeze-frame exercise involves the teacher choosing a student to talk in character about their life. When you are tapped on the shoulder by the teacher, introduce yourself as the character and speak about a typical day in your life during the war.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Activity Sheet E10.4  
Activity 4: Colloquialisms

Episode 10: 1918: Bertie  
Clip: On 'tick'

### Unfamiliar expressions

- 1 After viewing this episode and the three related clips, note any unusual words and their meanings in your *My Place* language journal.
- 2 Read the script from this episode and record any unfamiliar words and expressions.

Word	Meaning

- 3 Compare these with the language used by characters in the later *My Place* episodes: Episode 11: 1908: Evelyn; Episode 12: 1898: Rowley; and Episode 13: 1888: Victoria.

- 4 Find the words for 'mother' in at least five different languages. Make a list of 'pet' names that could refer to your mother, father, grandmother and grandfather.

'Mother' in other languages	
Language	Word for mother
Pet names	
Mother:	Grandmother:
Father:	Grandfather:



## Delivering news

- 1 Describe what you think this scene is about, using evidence from the text to support your ideas. What clues have been given earlier that helped you understand what is happening?

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- 2 Examine how the filmmaker has drawn attention to the action and events of this scene and try to understand why. Telegrams were an essential form of communication before it was common for people to have telephones in their homes. A telegram received during wartime usually conveyed bad news. Ask your parents or grandparents if they have an example of a telegram and examine its format.

- a Why do you think the telegrams were abbreviated like this? What was the cost of sending a telegram?

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- b What text formats have replaced the telegram today?

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- 3 After viewing the scene, list the sounds and the vision used in the table below. In the 'Purpose' column note what you see as significant in this scene.

Action	Sound	Vision	Purpose
Bicycle bell ringing	Piercing sound		Get attention, signal a bicycle is coming and clear the way.

- 4 Look closely at the way this opening scene is edited, with the montage of shots cutting back and forth between Bertie, Sid and others. With the class, discuss the following questions:
- a What is the purpose of this? What is the filmmaker trying to make you feel?
- b How does it make you feel?
- c Discuss how the filmmaker uses this technique to help tell the story.



## Sid

1 View the clips 'On "tick"' and 'Impact of war'. Write a character profile of Sid based on the information the filmmaker presents.

a Who is Sid?

\_\_\_\_\_

b What do you know about him?

\_\_\_\_\_

c Describe how he relates to Bertie.

\_\_\_\_\_

2 How does the filmmaker show that Sid is uncomfortable in Mr Watson's backyard?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 Why do you think Mr Watson makes Sid and Bertie stand outside the shop?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4 Why do you think Mr Watson treats Sid and Bertie differently?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Eddie

- 1 Describe Eddie's personality, using evidence from the clip to support your observations.

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- 2 Create a list of pros and cons for being a positive thinker. Share and discuss these responses with the rest of the class.

Advantages	Disadvantages

- 3 Think forward ten years and write a description of how Eddie's life has turned out. Do you think he will do well in life?

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## Significant objects

- 1 Which objects have significant or symbolic meaning throughout the episode? Look at Mr Watson's shop for clues. Then discuss how each object helps establish the plot and adds depth to the production.

Significant objects

- 2 Why do you think the filmmaker focused on these objects? Discuss the impact these symbols might have on the viewer.

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- 3 Mr Watson's shop was described as being like Merlin's cave. Who was Merlin? What link does he have to this story?

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- 4 With a partner, answer the following questions on another sheet of paper:
- a Why does the filmmaker keep Bertie's present for Eddie a secret until the end of the film?
  - b How does the 'secret' help build dramatic tension in the story? Look at the clues that lead to the final revelation when Bertie discovers Eddie has lost a leg.
  - c Identify the point in the story when all the elements finally come together.