

***The Loaded Dog* by Henry Lawson**

Rationale:

To introduce pupils to a non-British text, and explore how action and humour can be developed through a text, with particular attention to a writer's choices of vocabulary and sentence structure.

Teaching objectives	Learning objectives
W11 Appreciate the impact of figurative language in texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Understand the difference between figurative and literal language. b Understand how similes and metaphors can be more effective than adjectives. c Know how to choose 'powerful' verbs. d Choose similes and metaphors carefully and effectively.
S2 Explore the impact of a variety of sentence structures, e.g. <i>recognising when it is effective to use short direct sentences.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Know what a verb is. b Understand the differences between simple, compound and complex sentences. c Know how to expand noun phrases for effect . d Appreciate how varied sentences can make writing exciting and amusing.
TLR10 Analyse the overall structure of a text to identify how key ideas are developed, e.g. <i>through the organisation of the content and the patterns of language used.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Appreciate how humour and action can be developed during a text. b Appreciate the structure of a text. c Appreciate how humour can be created through a writer's choice of words.
TLR16 Recognise how texts refer to and reflect the culture in which they were produced, e.g. <i>in their evocation of place and values.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Recognise that texts are based on values or assumptions. b Pick out the values and assumptions in a text. c Understand how a story is affected by its setting.

Resources:

Lawson's life and work:

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/lawson/>
<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/lawson.htm>

Texts of Lawson's work, including *The Loaded Dog*:

<http://whitewolf.newcastle.edu.au/words/authors/L/LawsonHenry/>
<http://www.poemhunter.com/henry-lawson/poet-3084/>
<http://www.readbookonline.net/stories/Lawson/155/>

Text of *The Loaded Dog* available from the Teachit short story library.

Teaching outline

Lesson number	Learning objectives	Teaching
1	<p><i>Appreciate the structure of a text</i></p> <p><i>Understand how a story is affected by its setting</i></p>	<p><i>The annotated copy of the story below suggests pause points and is annotated with possible teaching points.</i></p> <p>Students must not see the whole story. They are going to make predictions in order to think about the structure and how the writer prepares the reader. (You could show the story bit-by-bit on an interactive whiteboard, annotating as you go.)</p> <p>Get students to think about the story's title and what the story might therefore be about.</p> <p>Show the first paragraph of the story on OHT 1 (see below). Read the first paragraph aloud. Now model for the class how you can 'mine' the paragraph for clues that you can use to predict how the story continues. Point out the technical vocabulary and how it establishes an occupational setting (gold mining). Now ask students to predict the next page.</p> <p>Continue reading the story, stopping at the marked 'pause points'. (See teacher's copy of the story below.) Get students to make further predictions. Always insist that students justify their predictions in terms of the story so far.</p> <p>Get as far as 'Andy stood stock still, staring after them'. Wrap up the lesson by returning to the objectives: what has been learnt? How has prediction helped us to understand the sequencing of the story and how the reader's reaction is controlled (or 'structured')?</p>
2	<p><i>Appreciate how varied sentences can make writing exciting and amusing</i></p> <p><i>Understand how similes and metaphors can be more effective than adjectives</i></p>	<p>Re-cap on last lesson and what we have learnt or inferred about the story.</p> <p>Continue reading the story from 'Run, Andy! Run!'.</p> <p>EITHER: Show OHT 2 and use teacher guide sheet 1 to model how to analyse the style of this passage and its effects on the reader. Think aloud about the first few lines, paying particular attention to techniques already studied: powerful verbs, expanded phrases, imagery and – especially – the choice of sentence structures to create a 'loose' tone that is both exciting and semi-comic – as though the narrator is not taking the bushmen's predicament very seriously. (<i>You could use parts of handout 1 to show how sentences could have been written differently with a different effect.</i>)</p> <p>Get students to contribute to the continuation of the analysis.</p> <p>OR: use handout 1 to help students to explore the style of the passage independently.</p> <p>Read on up to ' – he's got a live cartridge in his mouth – '. Get students to predict the next page.</p>
3	<p><i>Appreciate how varied sentences can make writing exciting and amusing</i></p>	<p>Gather together yesterday's predictions and involve the class in evaluating their likelihood in the light of the story so far. Cross out insupportable predictions.</p>

	<p><i>Understand how similes and metaphors can be more effective than adjectives</i></p>	<p>Talk through with the class the likely style of the next section of the story:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentence types • sentence variety (if any) • vocabulary • similes and metaphors to make descriptions vivid. <p>Tell students (probably in pairs on mini-wipeboards) that they are going to write the next 150–300 words. Remind them of the criteria to do with plausible events and style. Give them 20 minutes to work on this while you do guided writing with one group.</p> <p>GUIDED WRITING:</p> <p>Clarify task and objectives: Very briefly re-cap the task and re-establish the objective as: <i>use varied sentences, similes and metaphors to make writing more effective.</i></p> <p>Revise sentences, similes and metaphors: Through brief discussion, re-establish what the group knows about these techniques, their different uses and how they could be particularly useful for this task.</p> <p>Strategies check: Briefly encourage suggestions for the content of the writing.</p> <p>Try it out: Watch as pupils try writing the next section of the story. Intervene only where necessary. For example, you might ask a pupil to make sure they deliberately use the targeted techniques.</p> <p>Review and feedback: Share results. Praise efforts and keep returning to the purpose of the exercise.</p> <p>Next steps: Get pupils to think about how they could improve their – and each other’s – writing. Get them to jot down their improvement intentions.</p> <p>Take feedback from the writing. Get guided group members to share their improvement targets.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><i>Appreciate how humour can be created through a writer’s choice of words</i></p> <p><i>Choose similes and metaphors carefully and effectively</i></p>	<p>Read the rest of the story, concentrating on how the narrator’s tone is created through style and vocabulary (see marginal annotations for guidance.)</p> <p>Get students to go back over the last section of the story and find more examples of Lawson’s comic methods.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><i>Appreciate the structure of a text</i></p> <p><i>Appreciate how humour and action can be developed during a text</i></p>	<p>Introduce the class to the idea of a humour and action development graph (see handout). The purpose is to help students to plot the rise and fall of action and humour in the story and – by plotting both elements on the same graph – to consider the relationship (if any) between the two.</p>

<p>6</p>	<p><i>Recognise that texts are based on values or assumptions</i></p> <p><i>Pick out the values and assumptions in a text</i></p> <p><i>Understand how a story is affected by its setting</i></p>	<p>Use <i>Who and what was Henry Lawson?</i> OHT 3 / handout 3 to explore connections between Lawson’s life and the setting and values in <i>Loaded Dog</i>.</p> <p>Show OHT 3 to introduce the subject. Model jotting down ideas in the right-hand column and drawing arrows to show connections between ideas and information in the two columns. For example, you might write in the Impact on ‘The Loaded Dog’ column the simple observation that the story is set in Australia (explain how you infer this) and arrow that observation to the first piece of information in the left-hand column.</p> <p>That is easy. A more challenging task would be to write a comment about racial attitudes in the story and connect them to the left-hand column’s assertion that Lawson was a racist.</p> <p>Let students in pairs or groups explore the story in the light of the items in the left-hand column and fill in the right-hand column concisely.</p> <p>Take feedback.</p> <p>As a plenary you could role play Lawson responding to some of the students’ observations about the story, or you could get students to respond in role to other students’ comments.</p> <p>Extension: read other Lawson stories; do further research into his life and work (see web links above).</p>
<p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p>	<p><i>Understand how similes and metaphors can be more effective than adjectives</i></p> <p><i>Know how to choose ‘powerful’ verbs</i></p> <p><i>Choose similes and metaphors carefully and effectively</i></p> <p><i>Appreciate how humour can be created through a writer’s choice of words</i></p> <p><i>Know how to expand noun phrases for effect</i></p> <p><i>Appreciate how varied sentences can make writing exciting and amusing</i></p>	<p>These are the ‘synoptic’ lessons: you want students to do some writing that draws on the skills listed in the box on the left.</p> <p>Work with the class on generating ideas for this scenario:</p> <p>Six months later the dog retrieves something else that alarms or infuriates the three miners. What could it be?</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a snake • a scorpion • a bag of stolen bank notes • their Christmas turkey. <p>Get students to write the 300-word section of the story in which the men try to escape the dog or get it to drop the object it is carrying.</p> <p>Before they begin writing, spend some time revising the skills listed opposite. Make these into the explicit success criteria that you can get students to use to assess each other’s work and give each other useful advice as they develop their writing. Also use the criteria as the foci for guided group work.</p> <p>Extension: Get students to write the title of their story and also the first and last 100 words. This will help them to think about story structuring.</p>

The Loaded Dog: first paragraph

OHT 1

Dave Regan, Jim Bently, and Andy Page were sinking a shaft at Stony Creek in search of a rich gold quartz reef which was supposed to exist in the vicinity. There is always a rich reef supposed to exist in the vicinity; the only questions are whether it is ten feet or hundreds beneath the surface, and in which direction. They had struck some pretty solid rock, also water which kept them baling. They used the old-fashioned blasting-powder and time-fuse. They'd make a sausage or cartridge of blasting-powder in a skin of strong calico or canvas, the mouth sewn and bound round the end of the fuse; they'd dip the cartridge in melted tallow to make it water-tight, get the drill-hole as dry as possible, drop in the cartridge with some dry dust, and wad and ram with stiff clay and broken brick. Then they'd light the fuse and get out of the hole and wait. The result was usually an ugly pot-hole in the bottom of the shaft and half a barrow-load of broken rock.

Teacher's annotated copy of *The Loaded Dog*

Dave Regan, Jim Bently, and Andy Page were sinking a shaft at Stony Creek in search of a rich gold quartz reef which was supposed to exist in the vicinity. There is always a rich reef supposed to exist in the vicinity; the only questions are whether it is ten feet or hundreds beneath the surface, and in which direction. They had struck some pretty solid rock, also water which kept them baling. They used the old-fashioned blasting-powder and time-fuse. They'd make a sausage or cartridge of blasting-powder in a skin of strong calico or canvas, the mouth sewn and bound round the end of the fuse; they'd dip the cartridge in melted tallow to make it water-tight, get the drill-hole as dry as possible, drop in the cartridge with some dry dust, and wad and ram with stiff clay and broken brick. Then they'd light the fuse and get out of the hole and wait. The result was usually an ugly pot-hole in the bottom of the shaft and half a barrow-load of broken rock.

PAUSE HERE for prediction exercise

There was plenty of fish in the creek: fresh-water bream, cod, cat-fish, and tailers. The party were fond of fish, and Andy and Dave of fishing. Andy would fish for three hours at a stretch if encouraged by a 'nibble' or a 'bite' now and then — say once in twenty minutes. The butcher was always willing to give meat in exchange for fish when they caught more than they could eat; but now it was winter, and these fish wouldn't bite. However, the creek was low, just a chain of muddy water-holes, from the hole with a few bucketfuls in it to the sizable pool with an average depth of six or seven feet, and they could get fish by baling out the smaller holes or muddying up the water in the larger ones till the fish rose to the surface. There was the cat-fish, with spikes growing out of the sides of its head, and if you got pricked you'd know it, as Dave said. Andy took off his boots, tucked up his trousers, and went into a hole one day to stir up the mud with his feet, and he knew it. Dave scooped one out with his hand and got pricked, and he knew it too; his arm swelled, and the pain

technical language
(underlined)

metaphor

precise technical language
contrasts with the chaotic
results

Not a very exciting
opening; too technical.
This could be just an
information book about
gold mining. On the other
hand, they sound like
rather amateur miners. Is
the story going to revolve
around a bigger-than-usual
disaster?

metaphor

Key question: how
competent and responsible
do these men sound? How
do you know?

throbbled up into his shoulder, and down into his stomach too, he said, like a toothache he had once, and kept him awake for two nights — only the toothache pain had a ‘burred edge’, Dave said.

Dave got an idea.

‘Why not blow the fish up in the big water-hole with a cartridge?’ he said. ‘I’ll try it.’

He thought the thing out and Andy Page worked it out. Andy usually put Dave’s theories into practice if they were practicable, or bore the blame for the failure and the chaffing of his mates if they weren’t.

PAUSE HERE for prediction exercise

He made a cartridge about three times the size of those they used in the rock. Jim Bently said it was big enough to blow the bottom out of the river. The inner skin was of stout calico; Andy stuck the end of a six-foot piece of fuse well down in the powder and bound the mouth of the bag firmly to it with whipcord. The idea was to sink the cartridge in the water with the open end of the fuse attached to a float on the surface, ready for lighting. Andy dipped the cartridge in melted bees’-wax to make it water-tight. ‘We’ll have to leave it some time before we light it,’ said Dave, ‘to give the fish time to get over their scare when we put it in, and come nosing round again; so we’ll want it well water-tight.’

Round the cartridge Andy, at Dave’s suggestion, bound a strip of sail canvas — that they used for making water-bags — to increase the force of the explosion, and round that he pasted layers of stiff brown paper — on the plan of the sort of fireworks we called ‘gun-crackers’. He let the paper dry in the sun, then he sewed a covering of two thicknesses of canvas over it, and bound the thing from end to end with stout fishing-line. Dave’s schemes were elaborate, and he often worked his inventions out to nothing. The cartridge was rigid and solid enough now — a

What is the effect of putting this statement as an isolated paragraph?

What usually happens in stories when someone gets a radical and dangerous idea?

very technical section

Dave’s schemes are often unsuccessful

formidable bomb; but Andy and Dave wanted to be sure. Andy sewed on another layer of canvas, dipped the cartridge in melted tallow, twisted a length of fencing-wire round it as an afterthought, dipped it in tallow again, and stood it carefully against a tent-peg, where he'd know where to find it, and wound the fuse loosely round it. Then he went to the camp-fire to try some potatoes which were boiling in their jackets in a billy, and to see about frying some chops for dinner. Dave and Jim were at work in the claim that morning.

PAUSE HERE for prediction exercise

They had a big black young retriever dog — or rather an overgrown pup - a big, foolish, four-footed mate, who was always slobbering round them and lashing their legs with his heavy tail that swung round like a stock-whip. Most of his head was usually a red, idiotic, slobbering grin of appreciation of his own silliness. He seemed to take life, the world, his two-legged mates, and his own instinct as a huge joke. He'd retrieve anything: he carted back most of the camp rubbish that Andy threw away. They had a cat that died in hot weather, and Andy threw it a good distance away in the scrub; and early one morning the dog found the cat, after it had been dead a week or so, and carried it back to camp, and laid it just inside the tent-flaps, where it could best make its presence known when the mates should rise and begin to sniff suspiciously in the sickly smothering atmosphere of the summer sunrise. He used to retrieve them when they went in swimming; he'd jump in after them, and take their hands in his mouth, and try to swim out with them, and scratch their naked bodies with his paws. They loved him for his good-heartedness and his foolishness, but when they wished to enjoy a swim they had to tie him up in camp.

He watched Andy with great interest all the morning making the cartridge, and hindered him considerably, trying to help; but about noon he went off to the claim to see how Dave and Jim were getting on, and to come home to dinner with them. Andy saw them coming, and put a panful of mutton-chops on the fire.

simile

impressive, original
extended noun phrase

euphemism/personification
for comic effect

extended **sibilance** for
comic effect: it makes itself
too obvious to be serious

Andy was cook to-day; Dave and Jim stood with their backs to the fire, as Bushmen do in all weathers, waiting till dinner should be ready. The retriever went nosing round after something he seemed to have missed.

PAUSE HERE for prediction exercise

Andy's brain still worked on the cartridge; his eye was **caught** by the glare of an empty kerosene-tin lying in the bushes, and it **struck** him that it wouldn't be a bad idea to **sink** the cartridge packed with clay, sand, or stones in the tin, to increase the force of the explosion. He may have been all out, from a scientific point of view, but the notion looked all right to him. Jim Bently, by the way, wasn't interested in their 'damned silliness'. Andy noticed an empty treacle-tin—the sort with the little tin neck or spout soldered on to the top for the convenience of pouring out the treacle—and it struck him that this would have made the best kind of cartridge-case: he would only have had to pour in the powder, stick the fuse in through the neck, and cork and seal it with bees'-wax. He was turning to suggest this to Dave, when Dave glanced over his shoulder to see how the chops were doing—and bolted. He explained afterwards that he thought he heard the pan spluttering extra, and looked to see if the chops were burning. Jim Bently looked behind and bolted after Dave. Andy stood stock-still, staring after them.

PAUSE HERE for prediction exercise

'Run, Andy! run!' they shouted back at him. 'Run!!! Look behind you, you fool!' Andy turned slowly and looked, and there, close behind him, was the retriever with the cartridge in his mouth—wedged into his broadest and silliest grin. And that wasn't all. The dog had come round the fire to Andy, and the loose end of the fuse had trailed and waggled over the burning sticks into the blaze; Andy had slit and nicked the firing end of the fuse well, and now it was hissing and spitting properly.

Andy's legs started with a jolt; his legs started before his brain did, and he made after Dave and Jim. And the dog followed Andy.

What is he looking for? He is a retriever: what does that mean? What will he do with what he is looking for?

Powerful verb choices:

How is 'caught' better than – say – 'attracted'?

Why 'struck' rather than – say – 'occurred to'?

Economical, 'powerful' verb. What advantage does 'sink' have over – say – 'put'?

Economical – wedged into his grin, not into his mouth that was grinning. Ask if the writing would have been as effective if it read: '*wedged into his mouth that was giving his broadest and silliest grin*'

Why is the sentence falsely broken with a full stop so that the last sentence begins with 'And'? [Comic, 'punchline' effect]

Dave and Jim were good runners — Jim the best — for a short distance; Andy was slow and heavy, but he had the strength and the wind and could last. The dog leapt and **capered** round him, delighted as a dog could be to find his mates, as he thought, on for a frolic. Dave and Jim kept shouting back, 'Don't foller us! don't foller us, you **coloured** fool!' but Andy kept on, no matter how they dodged. They could never explain, any more than the dog, why they followed each other, but so they ran, Dave keeping in Jim's track in all its turnings, Andy after Dave, and the dog circling round Andy—the live fuse swishing in all directions and hissing and spluttering and stinking. Jim yelling to Dave not to follow him, Dave shouting to Andy to go in another direction—to 'spread out', and Andy roaring at the dog to go home. Then Andy's brain began to work, stimulated by the crisis: he tried to get a running kick at the dog, but the dog dodged; he snatched up sticks and stones and threw them at the dog and ran on again. The retriever saw that he'd made a mistake about Andy, and left him and bounded after Dave. Dave, who had the presence of mind to think that the fuse's time wasn't up yet, made a dive and a grab for the dog, caught him by the tail, and as he swung round snatched the cartridge out of his mouth and flung it as far as he could: the dog immediately bounded after it and retrieved it. Dave roared and cursed at the dog, who seeing that Dave was offended, left him and went after Jim, who was well ahead....

PAUSE HERE

.....Jim swung to a sapling and went up it **like a native bear**; it was a young sapling, and Jim couldn't safely get more than ten or twelve feet from the ground. **The dog laid** the cartridge, **as carefully as if it was a kitten**, at the foot of the sapling, and capered and leaped and whooped joyously round under Jim. The big pup reckoned that this was part of the lark—he was all right now—it was Jim who was out for a spree. The

Powerful verb: 'capered' rather than – say – 'ran' Presumably Andy is not white. Is he a native Australian? ('Aborigine') Is the word 'coloured' racist? Was it at the time? What attitude towards black people might it suggest? Is there any evidence that Andy is treated differently from Dave and Jim?

long sentence to suggest the confusion, chaos

sentences long to maintain pace and flow

Use **teacher guide sheet 1** to model how to analyse the style of this passage and its effects on the reader, **OR** use **handout 1** to help students to explore the style of the passage

similes

fuse sounded as if it were going a mile a minute. Jim tried to climb higher and the sapling bent and cracked. Jim fell on his feet and ran. The dog swooped on the cartridge and followed. It all took but a very few moments. Jim ran to a digger's hole, about ten feet deep, and dropped down into it—landing on soft mud — and was safe. The dog grinned sardonically down on him, over the edge, for a moment, as if he thought it would be a good lark to drop the cartridge down on Jim.

'Go away, Tommy,' said Jim feebly, 'go away.'

The dog bounded off after Dave, who was the only one in sight now; Andy had dropped behind a log, where he lay flat on his face, having suddenly remembered a picture of the Russo-Turkish war with a circle of Turks lying flat on their faces (as if they were ashamed) round a newly-arrived shell.

There was a small hotel or shanty on the creek, on the main road, not far from the claim. Dave was desperate, the time flew much faster in his stimulated imagination than it did in reality, so he made for the shanty. There were several casual Bushmen on the verandah and in the bar; Dave rushed into the bar, banging the door to behind him. 'My dog!' he gasped, in reply to the astonished stare of the publican, 'the blanky retriever — he's got a live cartridge in his mouth —'

PAUSE HERE for prediction exercise

Get the class to write the next 300 – 400 words

The retriever, finding the front door shut against him, had bounded round and in by the back way, and now stood smiling in the doorway leading from the passage, the cartridge still in his mouth and the fuse spluttering. They burst out of that bar. Tommy bounded first after one and then after another, for, being a young dog, he tried to make friends with everybody.

personification

The Bushmen ran round corners, and some shut themselves in the stable. There was a new weather-board and corrugated-iron kitchen and wash-house on piles in the back-yard, with some women washing clothes inside. Dave and the publican bundled in there and shut the door — the publican cursing Dave and calling him a crimson fool, in hurried tones, and wanting to know what the hell he came here for.

Narrator uses what are — presumably — the publican's words. This allows a flavour of the conversation without slowing the narrative

The retriever went in under the kitchen, amongst the piles, but, luckily for those inside, there was a vicious yellow mongrel cattle-dog sulking and nursing his nastiness under there — a sneaking, fighting, thieving canine, whom neighbours had tried for years to shoot or poison. Tommy saw his danger — he'd had experience from this dog — and started out and across the yard, still sticking to the cartridge. Half-way across the yard the yellow dog caught him and nipped him. Tommy dropped the cartridge, gave one terrified yell, and took to the Bush. The yellow dog followed him to the fence and then ran back to see what he had dropped. Nearly a dozen other dogs came from round all the corners and under the buildings — spidery, thievish, cold-blooded kangaroo-dogs, mongrel sheep- and cattle-dogs, vicious black and yellow dogs — that slip after you in the dark, nip your heels, and vanish without explaining — and yapping, yelping small fry. They kept at a respectable distance round the nasty yellow dog, for it was dangerous to go near him when he thought he had found something which might be good for a dog to eat. He sniffed at the cartridge twice, and was just taking a third cautious sniff when —

Is this 'good writing'? Couldn't a better, more powerful verb have been used?

Use of 'you' and 'yours'. Why? What effect?

It was very good blasting powder — a new brand that Dave had recently got up from Sydney; and the cartridge had been excellently well made. Andy was very patient and painstaking in all he did, and nearly as handy as the average sailor with needles, twine, canvas, and rope.

Narrator maintains his tone of being detached and amused, admiring examples of technical expertise despite their disastrous effects. This is an essential ingredient of the humour.

Bushmen say that that kitchen jumped off its piles and on again.

When the smoke and dust cleared away, the remains of the nasty yellow dog were lying against the paling fence of the yard looking as if he had been kicked into a fire by a horse and afterwards rolled in the dust under a barrow, and finally thrown against the fence from a distance. Several saddle-horses, which had been 'hanging-up' round the verandah, were galloping wildly down the road in clouds of dust, with broken bridle-reins flying; and from a circle round the outskirts, from every point of the compass in the scrub, came the yelping of dogs. Two of them went home, to the place where they were born, thirty miles away, and reached it the same night and stayed there; it was not till towards evening that the rest came back cautiously to make inquiries. One was trying to walk on two legs, and most of 'em looked more or less singed; and a little, singed, stumpy-tailed dog, who had been in the habit of hopping the back half of him along on one leg, had reason to be glad that he'd saved up the other leg all those years, for he needed it now. There was one old one-eyed cattle-dog round that shanty for years afterwards, who couldn't stand the smell of a gun being cleaned. He it was who had taken an interest, only second to that of the yellow dog, in the cartridge. Bushmen said that it was amusing to slip up on his blind side and stick a dirty ramrod under his nose: he wouldn't wait to bring his solitary eye to bear — he'd take to the Bush and stay out all night.

Extended simile. Effect is simultaneously disgusting and amusing. Detail of observation further accentuates the narrator's amused detachment.

As though that had been his deliberate decision!

For half an hour or so after the explosion there were several Bushmen round behind the stable who crouched, doubled up, against the wall, or rolled gently on the dust, trying to laugh without shrieking. There were two white women in hysterics at the house, and a half-caste rushing aimlessly round with a dipper of cold water. The publican was holding his wife tight and begging her between her squawks, to 'hold up for my sake, Mary, or I'll lam the life out of ye.'

Further racial references

Dave decided to apologise later on, 'when things had settled a bit,' and went back to camp. And the dog that had done it all, 'Tommy', the great, idiotic mongrel retriever, came slobbering round Dave and lashing his legs with his tail, and trotted home after him, smiling his broadest, longest, and reddest smile of amiability, and apparently satisfied for one afternoon with the fun he'd had.

Personification

Andy chained the dog up securely, and cooked some more chops, while Dave went to help Jim out of the hole.

And most of this is why, for years afterwards, lanky, easy-going Bushmen, riding lazily past Dave's camp, would cry, in a lazy drawl and with just a hint of the nasal twang —

'Ello, Da-a-ve! How's the fishin' getting on, Da-a-ve?'

Jim's attempt to escape

OHT 2

Jim swung to a sapling and went up it like a native bear; it was a young sapling, and Jim couldn't safely get more than ten or twelve feet from the ground. The dog laid the cartridge, as carefully as if it was a kitten, at the foot of the sapling, and capered and leaped and whooped joyously round under Jim. The big pup reckoned that this was part of the lark — he was all right now — it was Jim who was out for a spree. The fuse sounded as if it were going a mile a minute. Jim tried to climb higher and the sapling bent and cracked. Jim fell on his feet and ran. The dog swooped on the cartridge and followed. It all took but a very few moments. Jim ran to a digger's hole, about ten feet deep, and dropped down into it — landing on soft mud — and was safe. The dog grinned sardonically down on him, over the edge, for a moment, as if he thought it would be a good lark to drop the cartridge down on Jim.

Teacher guide sheet 1: Jim's attempt to escape

Semi-colon indicates connection in meaning between the two sentences

italics: similes to create a clear but exaggerated picture in mind of reader

repeated 'ands' provide a fast compound sentence, each verb 'falling out of' the same subject, 'the dog'

a series of compound and simple sentences give the writing a lean, factual style

Personification (a sort of metaphor) gives a comic effect

Jim swung to a sapling **and** went up it *like a native bear*; it was a young sapling, **and** Jim couldn't safely get more than ten or twelve feet from the ground. The dog laid the cartridge, *as carefully as if it was a kitten*, at the foot of the sapling, **and** capered **and** leaped **and** whooped joyously round under Jim. The big pup reckoned that this was part of the lark — he was all right now — it was Jim who was out for a spree. The fuse sounded *as if it were going a mile a minute*. Jim tried to climb higher **and** the sapling bent **and** cracked. Jim fell on his feet **and** ran. The dog swooped on the cartridge **and** followed. It all took but a very few moments. Jim ran to a digger's hole, about ten feet deep, **and** dropped down into it — landing on soft mud — **and** was safe. The dog **grinned sardonically** down on him, over the edge, for a moment, as if he thought it would be a good lark to drop the cartridge down on Jim.

'ands' create compound sentences, which make for a looser, 'add-on' style. This suggests the events are too fast for the writer to control

extended adverbial phrases: more info about 'get' and 'laid'. The phrases provide 'flow'.

more 'ands' to keep the writing 'loose'

a non-finite subordinate clause in the middle of what is in essence a compound sentence relying on the repeated word, 'and'

Suddenly a long, complex sentence with four verbs*, and thus four clauses

*grinned, thought, would be, to drop

Which version is better?

handout 1

Study the two versions below and notice all the differences.

Think about:

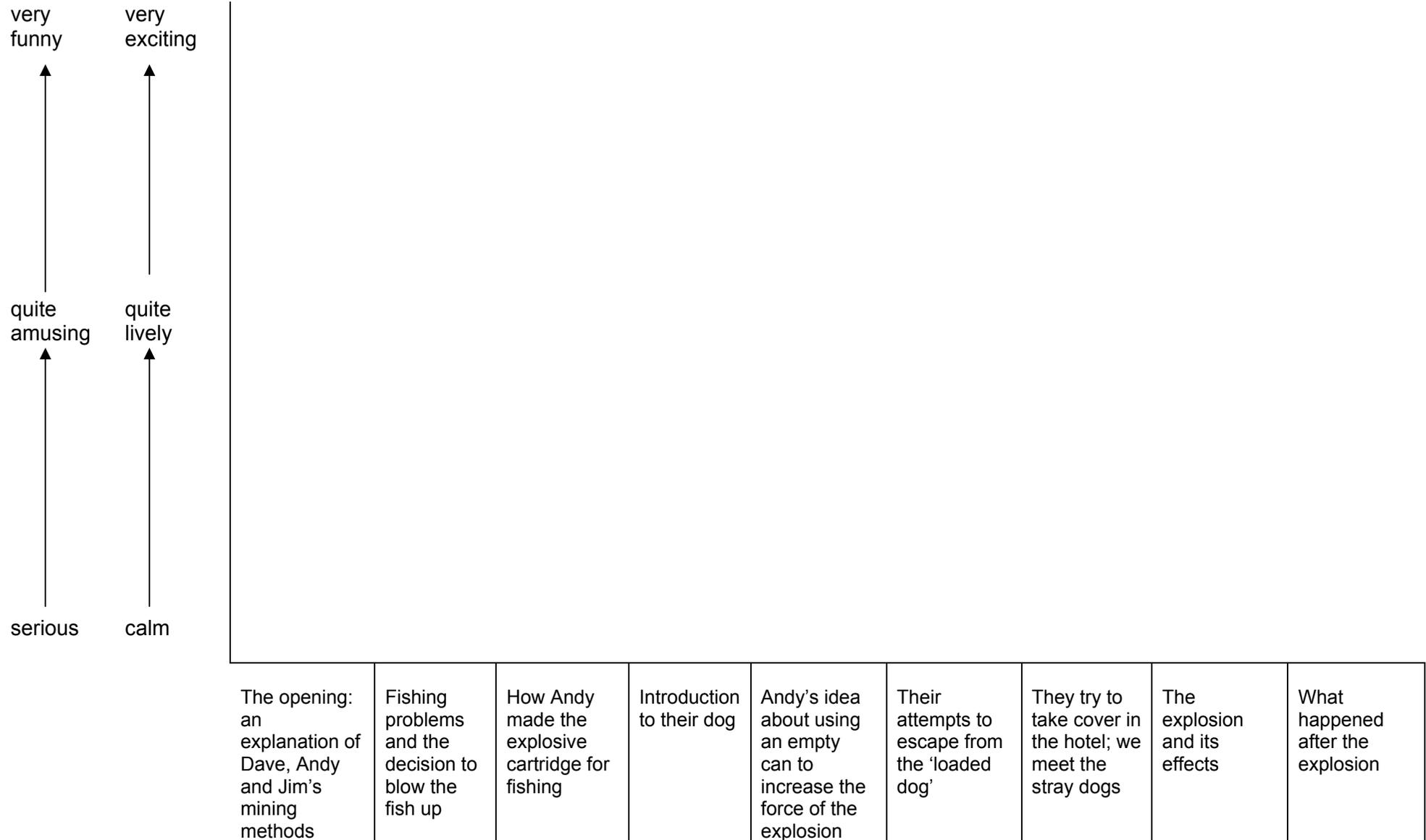
- types of sentences used
- choice of words
- use of similes and metaphors.

Jim swung to a sapling and went up it like a native bear; it was a young sapling, and Jim couldn't safely get more than ten or twelve feet from the ground. The dog laid the cartridge, as carefully as if it was a kitten, at the foot of the sapling, and capered and leaped and whooped joyously round under Jim. The big pup reckoned that this was part of the lark — he was all right now — it was Jim who was out for a spree. The fuse sounded as if it were going a mile a minute. Jim tried to climb higher and the sapling bent and cracked. Jim fell on his feet and ran. The dog swooped on the cartridge and followed. It all took but a very few moments. Jim ran to a digger's hole, about ten feet deep, and dropped down into it — landing on soft mud — and was safe. The dog grinned sardonically down on him, over the edge, for a moment, as if he thought it would be a good lark to drop the cartridge down on Jim.

Swinging to a young sapling, Jim scaled it like a native bear. Jim couldn't safely climb more than ten or twelve feet from the ground. The dog put the cartridge carefully at the foot of the sapling. Then it capered, leaped and whooped joyously round under Jim. The dog seemed to think that this was part of the game. He seemed to think he was all right now, and it was Jim who was out for a spree. Because the fuse sounded as if it were going a mile a minute, Jim tried to climb higher, but the sapling bent and cracked. Luckily Jim fell on his feet and ran. The dog picked up the cartridge and then he followed Jim. All this happened very quickly, and then Jim ran and dropped into a ten-foot-deep digger's hole. He landed on soft mud. He was safe. The dog looked down happily at Jim. He thought about dropping the cartridge on Jim.

Humour and action development graph for *The Loaded Dog* by Henry Lawson

handout 2



Who and what was Henry Lawson?

Lawson's life and work	Impact on 'The Loaded Dog'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was born in New South Wales on 17 June, 1867, the son of a Norwegian seaman. • Lawson's mother, Louisa, was an activist for women's rights and published the feminist newspaper <i>The Dawn</i>. • His family lived on poor land in the 'bush' in Mudgee district. • Much of Lawson's work was set in the Australian bush, or was about bush life. • Lawson once said that <i>"the bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple trees, no undergrowth. Nineteen miles to the nearest civilisation - a shanty on the main road ... There is nothing to see, however, and not a soul to meet. You might walk for twenty miles along this track without being able to fix a point in your mind, unless you are a bushman. This is because of the everlasting, maddening sameness of the stunted trees."</i> • Lawson was partly deaf and was often teased about it. • His parents separated in 1883. • He was often unemployed. • Henry Lawson was an unhappy man. • He was an alcoholic. He was probably a manic depressive. • He became a writer and poet. • He married Bertha Bredt in 1896, and they had two children. They separated in 1903. • Lawson was often sent to jail for failing to support his family. • He was possibly the first Australian-born writer who really looked at Australia with Australian eyes, not influenced by his knowledge of other countries. • Lawson wrote for <i>The Bulletin</i> which was an Australian magazine strongly in favour of equality, trade unions and Australian independence. • It was also racist and sexist. • He died on 2 September, 1922, in Sydney. <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">See: http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/lawson</p>	