

Exploring Ethical Issues  
in John Marsden's  
*Tomorrow When the War Began*  
Unit of Work

(Suitable for all state-based curriculums  
for the Australian English Curriculum:  
Year 8)

Unit overview and lessons  
based on exploring ethical  
issues in *Tomorrow When  
the War Began* by John  
Marsden and other war texts

SHELLEY MCNAMARA

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|   |   |                    |   |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| <b>Unit of work:</b>  | Exploring Ethical Issues in John Marsden's <i>Tomorrow When the War Began</i> | <b>Year:</b>       | 8   |
| <b>Duration:</b>  | 8 weeks   | <b>Assessment:</b> | Poetry analysis, postmodern creative piece of writing, presentation |
| <b>Text types:</b>  | Novel, poetry, speeches, short story  | <b>Concepts:</b>   | Ethics and interpretation   |
| <p><b>Learning experiences:</b> reading, writing, viewing, listening, creating</p> <p><b>Links to other learning areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History</li> </ul> <p><b>General capabilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Critical and creative thinking</li> <li>• Ethical understanding</li> <li>• Personal and social capability</li> </ul> <p><b>Other learning across the curriculum areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difference and diversity</li> <li>• Civics and citizenship</li> </ul> |   |                    |   |

| <b>Essential Learning Goal</b>  | <b>Key Learning Ideas</b>   | <b>Overarching Questions</b>   |
|---|---|--|
| For students to assess the ethical implications of ideas explored in texts about war. | <p>To compare and contrast war texts.</p> <p>To identify and explore ethical issues in war texts.</p> <p>To reflect on own process of writing postmodern creative texts.</p> <p>To personally reflect on texts about war.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the ethical implications of ideas explored in texts?</li> <li>2. How do personal ethics compare and contrast with ethical ideas explored in war texts?</li> <li>3. What are the similarities and differences in meaning between various war texts?</li> </ol> |


## **Exploring Ethical Issues in John Marsden's TWTWB Unit of Work**

### **Links to Australian English Curriculum: Year 8**

| <b>Language</b>                          |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Sub-strands</b>                       | <b>Content descriptions</b>  | <b>Elaborations</b>   |
| <b>Text structure &amp; organisation</b> | Analyse how the text structures and language features of persuasive texts, including media texts, vary according to the medium and mode of communication (ACELA1543)                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discussing how particular perspectives of the same event are portrayed through the combination of images and words in various media texts</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Text structure &amp; organisation</b> | Understand how cohesion in texts is improved by strengthening the internal structure of paragraphs through the use of examples, quotations and substantiation of claims (ACELA1766)                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing paragraphs of extended length that explain and substantiate a particular personal viewpoint</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Literature</b>                        |  |   |
| <b>Sub-strands</b>                       | <b>Content descriptions</b>  | <b>Elaborations</b>   |
| <b>Literature &amp; context</b>          | Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups (ACELT1626) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigating texts about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history from different sources and explaining differing viewpoints</li> <li>comparing attitudes and ideas in texts drawn from contexts that are different to students' own</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Responding to literature</b>          | Share, reflect on, clarify and evaluate opinions and arguments about aspects of literary texts (ACELT1627)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discussing the relative merits of literary texts and comparing and evaluating personal viewpoints on texts</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Responding to literature</b>          | Understand and explain how combinations of words and images in texts are used to represent particular groups in society, and how texts position readers in relation to those groups (ACELT1628)      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognising the similarities and differences between types of texts (for example a complex picture book and a feature film) in order to understand how different combinations of words and images lead readers to interpret visual texts in particular ways, according to audience, purpose and context</li> </ul> |
| <b>Responding to literature</b>          | Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analysing arguments for and against a particular issue in current community debates and justifying a personal stance</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Examining literature</b>              | Identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts (ACELT1630)                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understanding that tone (serious, bitter, sincere, amused) indicates attitude to the subject and to readers/listeners, who can identify or judge tone through past experience and language clues in the text</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Examining literature</b>              | Interpret and analyse language choices, including sentence patterns, dialogue, imagery and other language features, in short stories, literary essays and plays (ACELT1767)                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>select an aspect of a text such as a sentence pattern or an image or word and adapt it for a new context explaining how the change will affect meaning</li> </ul>  |

| <b>Literacy</b>                            |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Sub-strands</b>                         | <b>Content descriptions</b>  | <b>Elaborations</b>   |
| <b>Interacting with others</b>             | Interpret the stated and implied meanings in spoken texts, and use evidence to support or challenge different perspectives (ACELY1730)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpret the stated and implied meanings in spoken texts, and use evidence to support or challenge different perspectives (ACELY1730)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Interacting with others</b>             | Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content, including multimodal elements, to reflect a diversity of viewpoints (ACELY1731)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating texts that express views and values other than students' own</li> <li>researching subject matter on social issues and/or relationships and presenting ideas in particular ways to appeal to different audiences</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Interpreting, analysing, evaluating</b> | Analyse and evaluate the ways that text structures and language features vary according to the purpose of the text and the ways that referenced sources add authority to a text (ACELY1732)                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluating an author's use of particular textual structures and language features in achieving the representation of a point of view</li> <li>making assertions about the sufficiency and adequacy of information or evidence and the credibility of sources</li> <li>exploring texts that attempt to solve moral problems in a particular way, for example by consideration of consequences or rights/duties, and by identifying strengths as well as problems that arise from this approach</li> </ul> |
| <b>Interpreting, analysing, evaluating</b> | Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener (ACELY1735)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comparing representations of different social groups in texts drawn from different modes and media, for example comparing contemporary representations of homeless people with romantic representations of the swagman and the impact of these representations on the audience</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Creating texts</b>                      | Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate (ACELY1736) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>integrating multimodal approaches within a spoken presentation to purposefully develop meaning for a given audience</li> <li>selecting vocabulary to influence meaning and to position and persuade the audience, for example adjusting language to show or acknowledge power</li> </ul>   |

ACARA, Australian English Curriculum

| Content descriptions  | Lesson Outline  | Suitable for homework  | Resources  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Literature Responding to literature</b><br/>Share, reflect on, clarify and evaluate opinions and arguments about aspects of literary texts (ACELT1627)</p> <p><b>Literature Examining literature</b><br/>Identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts (ACELT1630)</p> | <p><b>Narrative voice and tone in the novel</b></p> <p><b>Guidance</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain, discuss or read notes from the worksheet about narrative voice and tone in the novel.</li> <li>2. Ask students to complete the exercise below:</li> </ol> <p><b>Exercise</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who is narrating or telling the story?</li> <li>2. What type of language does the narrator use to tell the story? What does this tell you about the character?</li> <li>3. What tone of voice of voice does the narrator use? What does this say about the narrator’s approach to the situation she is in?</li> </ol> <p><b>Diversity of Learners</b><br/>To differentiate the curriculum, implement the alternative approaches and/or discuss and ask students to complete the exercises below:</p> <p><b>Extension</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write a personal reflection on the first chapter of <i>Tomorrow When the War Began</i>. Write about 200 words. Write about your own ideas, feelings and opinions in response to the opening chapter. You may, for instance, want to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpret narrative elements such as plot, characters and setting</li> <li>• pose questions and make predictions about upcoming events in the novel</li> <li>• make connections with your own experiences and people and places you know</li> <li>• comment on language features, for example, how the narrator hooks you in</li> <li>• any other aspects of the chapter that interested you.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Special educational needs</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write dot points in response.</li> </ol> | <p style="text-align: center;"></p> | <p>Narrative voice and tone in the novel worksheet</p> <p><i>Tomorrow When the War Began</i></p> |