

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES



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## INTRODUCTION

I first discovered the wonderful world of **Inanimate Alice** a couple of years ago, when a teacher in my native Scotland brought it to my attention. From the minute I saw it I realised the huge potential of this apparently simple tale of a young girl and her journey through life, to provide teachers with a vehicle to transform their classrooms.

Being born digital, Alice is the literary hero of the age, and I have yet to meet anyone, young or old, who is not able to empathise with Alice and the situations she finds herself in. As the co-creator of the starter activities which Kelli refers to earlier in the magazine, I have been privileged to be a member of Alice's education 'gang' for some time now, and I hope that while Alice is in Australia I will be able to share with you some of the ways in which you might use the text to develop the literacy skills of your young learners.

## Meeting the needs of Young People and the Curriculum

**Inanimate Alice** is the first digital text to be listed officially as a recommended text in the Australian curriculum guidelines, recognition that by introducing it to the classroom, teachers and their students will be making significant strides towards meeting the literacy aims of the national curriculum. "to develop students' ability to interpret and create texts with appropriateness, accuracy, confidence, fluency and efficacy for learning in and out of school, and for participating in Australian life more generally."

Through the characters of Alice and Brad, young learners and their teachers are able to explore and discuss a range of topics, many of them relating to Alice's personal development, and – by extrapolation – to the personal development of the young readers themselves. The journey with Alice can play a significant role in producing confident individuals with a strong sense of citizenship and responsibility.



*"Texts chosen include media texts, everyday texts and workplace texts from increasingly complex and unfamiliar settings, ranging from the everyday language of personal experience to more abstract, specialised and technical language, including the language of schooling and academic study."*

**Inanimate Alice** is precisely the kind of 'media text' which young people will be interacting with in their own lives, and as teachers we have a responsibility to make sure they understand how these texts are created and how the interaction of the various elements of the story combine to convey particular messages. The Snappy tool which Andy explains on the previous page will provide teachers and students with the means to develop their own creative skills as they produce new versions of Alice's story in their own settings.

*"Students learn to adapt language to meet the demands of more general or more specialised purposes, audiences and contexts. They learn about the different ways in which knowledge and opinion are represented and developed in texts, and about how more or less abstraction and complexity can be shown through language and through multimodal representations."*

A close reading of the text of **Inanimate Alice** shows that it combines formal and informal language, dialogue and description,



in increasingly complex ways, allowing the young learner to develop in a progressive manner along with Alice herself as she becomes more sophisticated and discerning. New vocabulary is introduced when appropriate, which enables the young reader to build a word bank for use in his or her own stories.

*"This means that print and digital contexts are included, and that listening, viewing, reading, speaking, writing and creating are all developed systematically and concurrently."*

I have yet to find a better text than **Inanimate Alice** for providing the context within which all these skills can be developed simultaneously. Whether they are reading the text, discussing the use of sound, learning new language skills or planning their own episodes, young readers will want to be part of Alice's 'gang' too. What better starting point for teachers is there than that!

*\*all extracts taken from 'Literacy: expanding the repertoire of English usage' ACARA*