

THE DROVER'S WIVES

CONTEXT-BASED TEXTS

Text	Reading	Writing
An Agony Aunt Column (pp. 18–19)	<p>How does the pun 'ewe' shape our response to the text?</p> <p>What language choices demonstrate the context of this story within the modern world?</p> <p>How does the advice differ from your expectations of the advice that might have been offered in the 1890s?</p> <p>How does this text re-read the story in light of modern values? Is this an example of presentism? Is it unfair to the husband, or is it a valid perspective?</p>	<p>Imagine that the drover's wife has read Pamela's response and is keen to take her advice. The drover has just returned from his long absence.</p> <p>Script the couple's conversation, remembering to emphasise the contemporary context in your re-reading of the story.</p>
A Disease (pp. 26–27)	<p>What is amusing about the text's attempts to pathologise the events of the original story? How does the reference to 'distressingly racist language' provide us with an opportunity to reconsider this aspect of the tale?</p> <p>What links exist between Lawson's short story and this version?</p> <p>How is humour created through the absurdity of some of the references?</p>	<p>Imagine that you are a doctor consulting on a case of Drover's Wife Disease (DWD). What treatments can you recommend? What are your opinions of the conditions that have led to this disease? Do you know how to proceed OR does your medical training limit your insights?</p> <p>Write a personal essay from a patient who has changed her life and made a miraculous recovery from DWD. How does she understand her past illness? Does she believe she was ill? Does she contribute her experience to something else?</p>
A Mixtape (p. 31)	<p>Consider the order of the songs. What is O'Neill trying to tell the reader?</p> <p>How do we make meaning through commonly understood cultural references?</p>	<p>Continuing with the idea of telling a story through other stories, come up with a list of texts (unlike O'Neill, you can invent them!) that take the reader through the actions of a story through their titles.</p>
McCarthyesque (pp. 35–37)	<p>Find examples of the vivid use of similes. How does O'Neill use this technique to create a sense of narrative voice through imagery?</p>	<p>Examine the opening of one of McCarthy's novels (e.g. The Road). Rewrite this opening, either to shift the location OR to parody/experiment with McCarthy's style. Then take your new opening and make the style more your own.</p>

	Research Cormac McCarthy – what is notable about his writing style?	
A Children's Toy (p. 42)	How is Barbie a part of our cultural landscape, and what ideas is this doll associated with? Why is the Ken doll unavailable?	Consider the features of advertisements as persuasive texts. Use a novel you have read as the basis for designing some merchandise. How can you convince an audience to buy your products? Discuss your responses as a class.
A Gossip Column (pp. 54–55)	What aspects of the story have been changed to suit the textual form of a gossip column? How does this text engage its audience? What techniques does it use to sustain interest and create tension? What is both humorous and vague about the included quotes? How do they match the reader's expectations of the textual form?	Compose a gossip column exaggerating an incident from your own life. What is 'the truth', and what aspects of the story suit the form?
Glaswegian (pp. 56–57)	O'Neill was born in Glasgow. Is this an example of cultural stereotyping, or an authentic and amusing retelling? What does this text contribute?	Consider the many variations of English and the importance of authentic dialogue. To what other English-speaking locations could the story be transported? What dialect could an author use to reshape meaning? Brainstorm some ideas.
Cosmo Quiz (pp. 79–82)	Find out what On Our Selection is. Why is this reference amusing? What do the references to the time traveller's wife and the Stepford wife mean? Consider the tone established by the writer. How does it engage the reader and match the textual form?	Invent your own quiz that unites cultural references and self-help advice. Consider writing this as a multi-genre story in which the protagonist works through the quiz and considers each section in relation to their own life. Perhaps the protagonist could be based on a character from another story.
Horoscope (p. 91)	Why is the wife a Capricorn? Consider this astrological sign and its link to the story. What does this text demonstrate about the horoscope form? How does the writer place a positive spin on challenging events?	Write another character's horoscope, making sure to choose an appropriate astrological sign. Alternatively, you could write a future horoscope for the wife after the drover returns home.

<p>An Amazon Book Review (pp. 104–105)</p>	<p>Discuss why someone might write in capital letters (not solely as a ‘scream’ to the reader).</p> <p>Why does the writer mention ‘DESSERT’? What is being implied about the writer’s literacy?</p> <p>How does the Internet facilitate democratic expression of opinions? Why do such opinions need to be treated with caution?</p>	<p>O’Neill experiments with misunderstandings in this text. Write about a small incident that is misread by an onlooker. Make it clear to the reader what is really happening.</p>
<p>A Real Estate Advertisement (p. 118)</p>	<p>This is a punchy and persuasive piece that uses the conventions of the form to great effect. Discuss how humour is created and why this text is a valuable part of O’Neill’s book.</p>	<p>Research an iconic house from literature, preferably from the Gothic genre OR in an isolated location (e.g. Manderley from <i>Rebecca</i>, the Radley Place from <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>). Persuade the reader to buy this house. Compare advertisements as a class and consider how they relate to the reader.</p>
<p>A Reality TV Show (pp. 138–144)</p>	<p>Consider how your past reactions to this textual form guide your reading of the script.</p> <p>Why is the reference to Bundanyabba significant? To what Australian text does it refer?</p> <p>What do you make of the copious use of ‘[bleep]’?</p> <p>How does this text satirise reality TV?</p>	<p>Consider how the move from shot to shot enhances the tension and drama of the script. Could another story be reshaped into a TV show in a way that changes its pace? Script and/or storyboard the opening titles for a TV show (it need not be reality TV), creating a montage of key moments from a story.</p>
<p>A Letter to the Daily Telegraph (p. 153)</p>	<p>How does this text function as a piece of commentary on <i>Daily Telegraph</i> readers, and as a satire of social attitudes? What phrases or ideas lend it humour?</p>	<p>Write a response to this letter from an extreme viewpoint, with all the cliches that this implies. Use the tone of this text as inspiration.</p> <p>What makes this a challenging writing task?</p>
<p>A Movie Review (pp. 154–158)</p>	<p>This text reimagines the story as a blockbuster film. What knowledge of actors and directors is assumed, and how does O’Neill build on this knowledge?</p>	<p>Write another review for the same film from a fan’s perspective. Refer to some of the same ideas with an entirely different viewpoint.</p> <p>How has this exercise required an understanding of textual form?</p>

	Consider the tone of this piece. Why might someone derive pleasure from writing a relentlessly negative review?	
Ocker (pp. 172–174)	Consider how O'Neill's language choices shape the voice of this story. How is the mood of this story shaped by the projection of a particular Australian stereotype?	Does good writing rely on stereotypes or move beyond them? Using 'Ocker' and TWO more reinterpretations, discuss how your knowledge of 'good writing' has been shaped by the texts you have encountered. This response should explore your personal viewpoint. You may draw on general knowledge to explore or justify your ideas.
A Spam Email (pp. 177–179)	How does O'Neill playfully parody the conventions of the spam email? What is amusing about this take on Lawson's short story?	What is another 'modern' text (e.g. a TikTok or Instagram post) that could be used to retell this story? Create a short post appealing for help for the battling wife.
TV Guide (pp. 192–194)	Investigate THREE of the TV shows referenced in this text and explain what O'Neill is trying to achieve.	Take this idea further and consider what TV shows might be shown on a different channel (or perhaps a streaming platform). Include allusions to a different story in THREE TO FOUR episode synopses.
Contemporary (pp. 197–198)	How has a sense of context been created through modern references? How has the wife's character been transformed from the original?	Write the wife's response to this contemporary portrayal. What does she resent about the way she is depicted? What advice would she give the writer for his next story?
Internet Comments (pp. 206–209)	What is being said about the writers of these comments? What stereotypes does O'Neill draw upon? How is humour created within this text?	Resurrect some of these extreme and utterly irrational voices. Have them exchange opinions on an everyday occurrence (e.g. sitting in traffic, shopping for food). What is the challenge in writing this type of satire?
A Crass American Sitcom (pp. 237–246)	Is this an Australian view of American TV, or a more critical commentary on the genre itself? Give evidence to support a particular analysis of the text. What social commentary does it engage in? This text is rife with innuendo (and possibly not suitable for some assessment tasks). Who is the target audience?	Rhoda and Mary have no lines in this text. Choose ONE of the girls and give her her own monologue. How will you create a voice for this character?