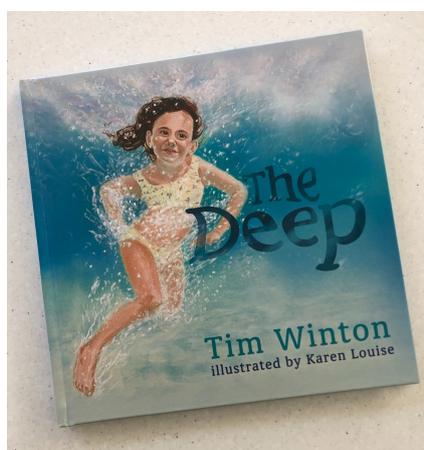




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# Interacting through Reading

## No 3: The Deep



### Lesson Sequence Overview

[The Deep](#) by Tim Winton and Karen Louise (1998, Fremantle Press) is a recently republished classic Australian picture book about a young girl named Alice and her family who live by the sea. All the family members swim in the sea and jump off the jetty each day except for Alice. Alice is actually afraid of the deep water. After several attempts at overcoming her fear she eventually forgets as she is persuaded and distracted by dolphins swimming in the bay.

The following learning sequence has been designed to maximise interaction and engagement with the book by showing how a writer can draw upon their own experiences and values to construct a story or narrative. [The Deep](#) is influenced by Tim Winton's value of family and love and respect for the environment. Students are supported through carefully designed tasks before, during and after reading the text. Through the strategies and interactions, learning has been designed to link reading and writing through use of the teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka & Jones, 2016 and Rossbridge & Rushton, 2015). By understanding Tim Winton's background and its influence on his writing, students will then use their own experiences and values to plan for writing their own narrative about a particular fear.

**It is necessary to read the book several times before implementing the sequence.**  
The following table summarises strategies designed for interacting with the book.



Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading	Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Floorstorm</li><li>• Investigating the author</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading without interruption</li><li>• Reread with think alouds</li><li>• Reread whole text</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell Me questions</li><li>• Conscience Alley</li><li>• Hunting for evidence</li><li>• Oral storytelling</li></ul>	<p>Purpose: to entertain by narrating</p> <p>Focus on planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modelling / text deconstruction</li><li>• Joint construction</li><li>• Independent construction</li></ul>

## Before Reading

### Floorstorm

Students can be reminded that predicting and making connections to prior knowledge and experience is an important part of reading. Tell students that floorstorming (White, 2017 and Wilhelm, 2004) will help them to engage with the new book that they are going to read.



A display of images (see above) can be placed on the floor for the whole class or copies of the images can be given to small groups. The images should relate to the setting of the text. Also include images of the author Tim Winton and his family if available. Students are instructed to view the images and record observations, ideas or connections on post-it notes. Ensure only one word or phrase is written on each post-it note.

After floorstorming students can remove the post-it notes and arrange in groups. This will assist in making connections between ideas and developing vocabulary required in the text.

### Investigating the author

Before reading, it is helpful to investigate the background and motivation of the author and illustrator. After making connections between the floorstorm and the front cover, students can identify the name of the author and illustrator on the front cover of [The Deep](#). Ask students if they have ever heard of the author Tim Winton. Tell them that many authors draw on their own experiences and values when writing.

Students can be provided with a list of questions which need to be read and discussed before viewing the video, [Why author Tim Winton's books shine a light on spectacular Australia | 60 Minutes Australia](#) (0:41-9:51). This was filmed a couple of years after [The Deep](#) was written. Whilst viewing, students listen for responses that will answer the following questions:

- Who is Tim Winton's audience?
- What is important to Tim Winton?
- What are the names of Tim Winton's children?
- Where does Tim Winton and his family live and what is it like?

After viewing students can be given a few moments to finish recording their responses and then share with a partner. Briefly share responses. Ensure students keep these responses for use after reading.

Return to the front and back cover of the book as well as the notes on the author and illustrator inside the back cover. Continue to make connections between the floorstorm and video as well as what has been shown from the book so far. A whole class discussion can then focus on the question, 'Where does Tim Winton get his ideas for writing?'

Show a current image of Tim Winton as well as other children's books he has written over time. Ask students if they can make any further connections or elaborate on Tim Winton's influences. Discuss his typical purpose and target audience.



# During Reading

## Reading without interruption

Read [The Deep](#) without interruption. Preferably the book is read by the teacher or a reading can be found on [YouTube](#).

## Reread with think alouds

Reread [The Deep](#) using think alouds to focus on making connections to discussions before reading and in particular the source of Tim Winton's ideas. For example:

- I don't know if anyone noticed but the title on the title page is like the cover in that it has a wavy font. I wonder why this was chosen (p1).
- The setting seems similar to where Tim Winton lives. Alice is introduced first as the main character. I wonder why she was chosen (p2-3).
- The family looks familiar. The complication seems to be Alice being afraid of the deep water but others in the family are not (p4-5).
- I wonder what motivated the choice of character names (6-7).
- Alice seems to be continually scared by the water while it seems to be a very important part of life for the rest of the family. I wonder why Tim Winton chose Alice to respond differently and does it really matter if she doesn't like the water (p8-13).
- I'm getting hints that Alice actually wants to be able to overcome her fear as she attempts to resolve her problem (p14-18).
- I've noticed the father has a ponytail. That reminds me of someone (p19).
- It seems that being afraid of the deep becomes more of a problem for Alice. I wonder why and why did Tim Winton write about it (p20-23).
- I feel like something might change. Perhaps the dolphins are a trigger for a change in Alice's behaviour and feelings (p24-25).
- I think the dolphins helped Alice deal with her fear. I wonder why Tim Winton made this choice (26-29).
- Alice doesn't realise she is in the deep until her family come to her. She hesitates but then feels supported by them. I think this is the resolution of her fear (p30-35).
- I don't think Alice will be afraid of the deep anymore. Maybe Tim Winton wants to give the message that the setting combined with family can be safe. (p36)

## Reread the whole text

Read the whole text again without teacher interruption. Students may wish to add their own responses during this reading. The text should be read several additional times throughout the lesson sequence.



# After Reading

## Tell Me Questions (Chambers, 1993)

Aidan Chambers's basic, general and special 'Tell Me' questions have been developed to encourage response to books. The special questions should be selected based on the particular book. Their intention is to develop discussion and encourage thinking to share ideas, make connections and express opinions to extend understanding of texts whilst listening to the ideas of others. **They are not intended as traditional comprehension questions for written responses.** After reading the text again, use the [Think, Pair, Share visible thinking routine](#) (Harvard, Project Zero) to discuss the basic questions as a whole class.

### Basic Questions

- Was there anything you liked about this book?
- Was there anything you disliked about the book?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Were there any patterns or connections that you noticed?

In small groups ask students to continue the discussion by responding to the following questions. These could be placed on cards so students discuss one group of questions at a time. Students should be encouraged to reread and refer to their before reading responses from 'Investigating the author' whilst in groups.

### General Questions

- Has anything that happened in this book ever happened to you? In what ways was it the same or different? Did the book make you feel differently about your own similar experience?
- Does anyone know anything about the writer? Or about how the story came to be written?

### Special Questions

- Who was telling/narrating the story? Do we know? How do we know?
- Is the story told in the first person (and if so, who is this person)? Or the third person? By someone we know about in the story or by someone we know or don't know about outside the story?
- What does the person telling the story – the narrator – think or feel about the characters? Does s/he like or dislike them? How do you know?
- Think of yourself as a spectator. With whose eyes did you see the story? Did you only see what one character in the story saw, or did you see things sometimes as another character saw them, and sometimes as another and so on?



Share important points or question as a whole class, with a particular focus on connections made between the book and Tim Winton's values and experience.

## Conscience Alley

Briefly discuss the fear experienced by Alice. Conscience Alley is a drama strategy useful for exploring character dilemmas. Students form two lines facing each other. A student walks between the lines in the role of Alice as one side gives opposing advice to those on the other side, acting as Alice's conscience as she tries to decide whether she should swim in the deep or not. When Alice reaches the end of the alley, she makes her decision to share with the class (See Dutton et al, 2018 and [UK Drama Resource](#)).

After Conscience Alley, students should discuss how Alice reached her decision and how aspects of the setting or environment as well as family support influenced her decision making. Connect this discussion back to Tim Winton's own values and experiences.



## Hunting for evidence in the text

By now the class would have connected the subject matter of the book with the experiences and values of Tim Winton, particularly in terms of his love and respect for both family and the environment where he lives in Western Australia. Explain that they are now going to hunt for evidence of this in both the words and images across the book.

Reread part of the text, stopping at certain points and model recording evidence from the text showing Tim Winton's values in both the words and images. Once students understand the process, provide small groups with a copy of the book (or the [YouTube clip](#)) and ask them to continue hunting for evidence. Evidence can be compared across groups.

## Oral story telling over time

Remind students that Tim Winton has used his own family and experience to come up with the idea for the story. Ask students if they know how long the story took to happen (Chambers, 1993). Read the text again but ask students to pay close attention to how long the events take across the text. After reading share responses and ask students what word choices assisted them in understanding the time frame of the story.

Together, revisit the text and record the references to time or sequencing at the

beginning of sentences (openers) that show when the events occur across the book.  
For example:

Every morning

Everyday

Some mornings

Sometimes

Sometimes

Then

One morning\*

Then

Suddenly\*

Then

And then

Note how 'One morning' and 'Suddenly' alert the reader to a specific time where the complication or overcoming the fear begins to be resolved. Prior to this, time is ongoing and generalised across many days, weeks or even months.

Ask students to identify a long term fear they have had in their own life. Discuss how long it took to resolve. With the starters above ask students to tell their own oral story to a partner.

After sharing their stories discuss how the openers helped them to structure their story and show the time frame.

## Writing

### Modelling / text deconstruction (planning)

Tell students that Tim Winton drew on his own experience to write [The Deep](#) and that they are going to do the same by identifying their own experience of a particular fear as the basis for planning for writing their own narrative.

Tell students that first, the process of planning will be modelled for them. Revise the stages of a narrative. The teacher identifies their own fear and models completing a planning sheet (see below) based on using or adapting the openers from [The Deep](#). Highlight how they develop the narrative structure. In addition, events or details of the story are added into the planning column.

After planning discuss what the planning reveals about the experience and values of the writer/teacher. Also identify the time frame of the story and how the choice of openers will guide the reader through the narrative.

## Narrative planning based on experience and values

Fear: *Jumping over a vault*

Narrative stages	Tim Winton's Openers	My Openers	Planning
Orientation to introduce characters and setting	Everyday	<i>Everyday for two weeks each year</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do gymnastics at school</li> <li>• swing on bars</li> <li>• somersaults</li> <li>• jump over vault</li> </ul>
Complication / problem	But	<i>But one day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• jumped over the vault and got stuck</li> <li>• laughed at by others</li> </ul>
Events / attempted resolutions	Every morning Everyday Some mornings Sometimes Then	<i>Occasionally some days Then</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pretended to be sick</li> <li>• strapped my ankle and limped</li> <li>• took a day off</li> </ul>
Resolution	One morning Then Suddenly Then	<i>One day Then Eventually</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teacher wouldn't accept excuses</li> <li>• encouraged by friends</li> <li>• took a deep breath</li> </ul>

### Joint construction (planning)

Tell students that as Tim Winton has drawn on his own values and experiences we are now going to plan for a class narrative about overcoming a particular fear. Select a fear that is common to the students. Develop joint criteria for the narrative and then jointly construct the planning:

- text entertains by drawing on writers' experience
- the problem of a fear is resolved
- clear narrative stages
- openers indicate time frame and guide the reader through the narrative

Based on the chosen fear, jointly complete a planning sheet like the example completed during modelling.

The purpose of joint construction, even at the planning stage, is to handover to the students so there should be 50/50 participation between the teacher and students. This will require the teacher to facilitate the writing but in particular the conversation about the text based on the metalanguage used in the modelling/deconstruction lesson. This can be achieved through thinking aloud, posing open questions and pausing to invite students into the conversation. Other strategies such as think, pair, share and writing ideas on mini whiteboards as well as sharing the pen are useful for ensuring joint participation in the process.

## Independent construction (planning)

Students complete their own narrative plan by identifying their own fear, using or adapting openers to structure the narrative and time frame. Students may use their oral story shared after reading.

After planning they can return to the jointly developed criteria and predict if their plan will lead to a narrative addressing the criteria.

\*The cycle of modelling, jointly constructing and independent construction could then be repeated for drafting, editing and reviewing and publishing.

## References

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