

Year 9

Reading Magazine 2016



NAPLAN NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
Literacy and Numeracy

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The Terracotta Army

In 1974, some farmers in the Shaanxi province in China were digging a well. Instead of water they uncovered something quite extraordinary; a site hidden underground for over 2000 years. Archaeologists began work, and the magnitude of the find gradually became clear.

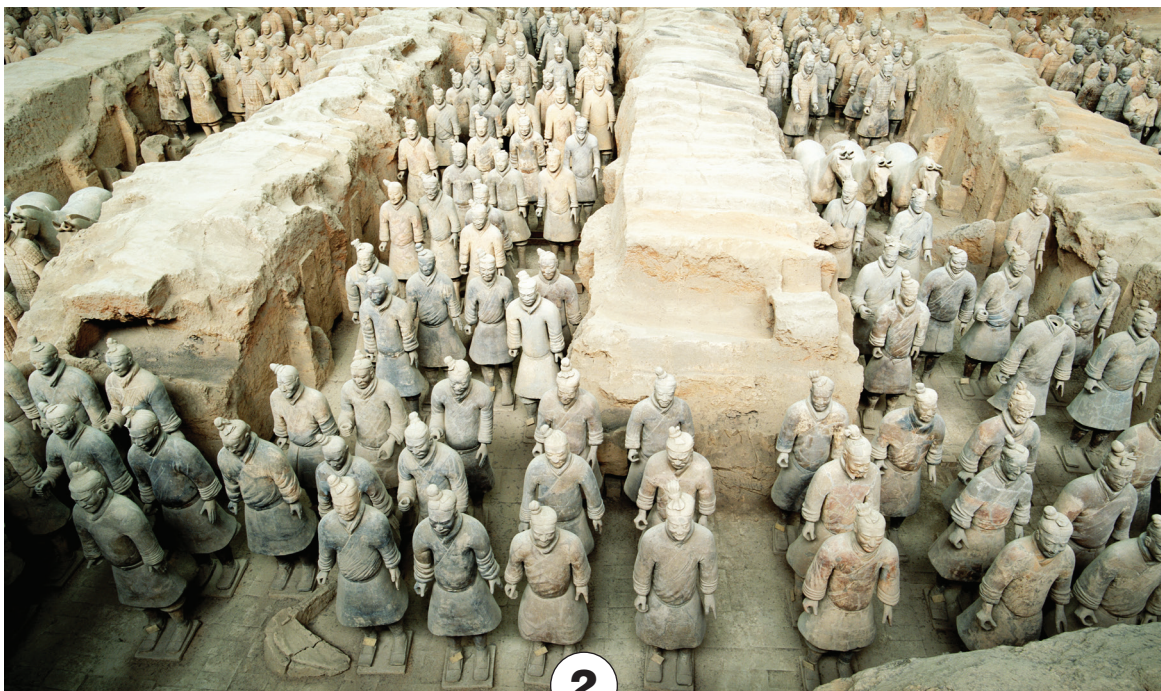
What they had stumbled upon was the necropolis or burial ground for the Chinese emperor Qin Shi Huang, who died over 2200 years ago. Three vast pits made from earth and wood held a huge army of over 8000 life-sized soldiers made from terracotta (a type of earthenware made from clay), all standing in military formation. Each figure was unique in appearance, with different facial expressions, haircuts, uniforms and weapons. There were chariots too, drawn by hundreds of terracotta horses, as well as offices and stables constructed in the style of the Imperial Palace.



The thousands of figures were produced in an early assembly-line manner, with head, arms, legs and torsos cast separately and then assembled. A number of basic moulds were used to cast the heads and faces, but after assembly each figure was made individual by further sculpting by hand.

Construction of the tomb began when the emperor ascended to the throne at age 13, and it continued for almost 40 years until his death. It is estimated that 700 000 workers were needed over this period.

The emperor was buried with a whole city to accompany him into the afterlife. He believed the army would protect him and help him keep his power beyond his death. Like pharaohs of ancient Egypt, the emperor was buried surrounded by all the trappings of his earthly life.



The Great Blondin

Niagara Falls is, in fact, three waterfalls that sit across the international border between Canada and the United States (US). The most recognisable section is the beautiful Horseshoe Falls. These are the most powerful falls in North America, with a thundering 50-metre drop into a churning pool. For most people, Niagara Falls is a natural wonder to be admired from a safe distance. Crossing or going over the Falls is now illegal, but in the past, a small number of people chose to risk their lives for fame and fortune at Niagara Falls.

Perhaps the most famous Niagara daredevil was the professional French tightrope walker known as The Great Blondin. In June 1859, he stretched an eight-centimetre-thick tightrope 335 metres across the Horseshoe Falls section of Niagara. On the Canadian side of the Falls the rope was secured to a large rock and on the American side, to a mighty oak tree. More than 25 000 onlookers came to see what many believed would be a horrifying accident. Blondin then walked along the rope using only a nine-metre-long balancing pole as a 'safety' device. After resting on the Canadian side for twenty minutes he strapped a large camera to his back and returned across the rope to America, pausing to take photos of the expectant crowd on the way.

Blondin then proceeded to devise even more extraordinary crossings of the Horseshoe Falls. On one he first walked backwards to Canada and then returned pushing a wheelbarrow. On another he somersaulted, backflipped and hung from the rope by one hand. He even carried his manager, who clung to his back in terror, from Canada to the US. In 1896, at the age of 71, Blondin made his last crossing. He died of natural causes the following year.



Horseshoe Falls

The wave

Looking at the clear blue water gives him a strange ache. The water at home, in the far west, is nothing like this. It is always brown, or at least never clear. There the water seems to settle reluctantly. It never quite seems permanent but rather it seems borrowed—about to dry up completely at any time. But here on this glittering beach, with the giant cobalt Pacific Ocean rolling and pulsing towards him, the water seems infinite and eternal. He breathes deeply, drawing in the brackish air whose salt clings to him like a scaly coating. The cool seawater creams around his ankles then drains away in clear sheets over the firm golden sand.

He is part of a program showing country kids another place, letting them experience the unfamiliar. He's learning to surf and it's his second day. So far he's been less than successful. The instructor has given him the lessons, shown him the basic actions: when to paddle, when to crouch then stand, where to place his feet. But surfing has eluded him. He has fallen and thumped his knee on hard sand in shallow water. He's been dumped and pounded under a freak breaker that spun him like a washing machine. He's had saltwater forced straight through his mouth and nose until he couldn't even cough.

He paddles out again this morning in the sharp sunlight, ducking his way through the peaks and troughs and foam of the surf. And then he sees it. To him it looks just right: a wave not too full, curving at the right angle, that will crest as he begins his catch. He has no time to think—in the moment he just feels—and the next thing he knows he has turned and is paddling. He feels the energy of the wave lift and project him. He rises into a practised crouch and stays there. Then steadily he straightens his legs and it's like he's riding the whole ocean. He lets out a long howl of pure elation.

Geysers

What are geysers?

Geysers are types of hot springs which periodically shoot a column of steaming water high into the air. They occur in areas of volcanic activity where hot lava is found close to the Earth's surface. The name comes from the Icelandic verb *geysa*, to gush.

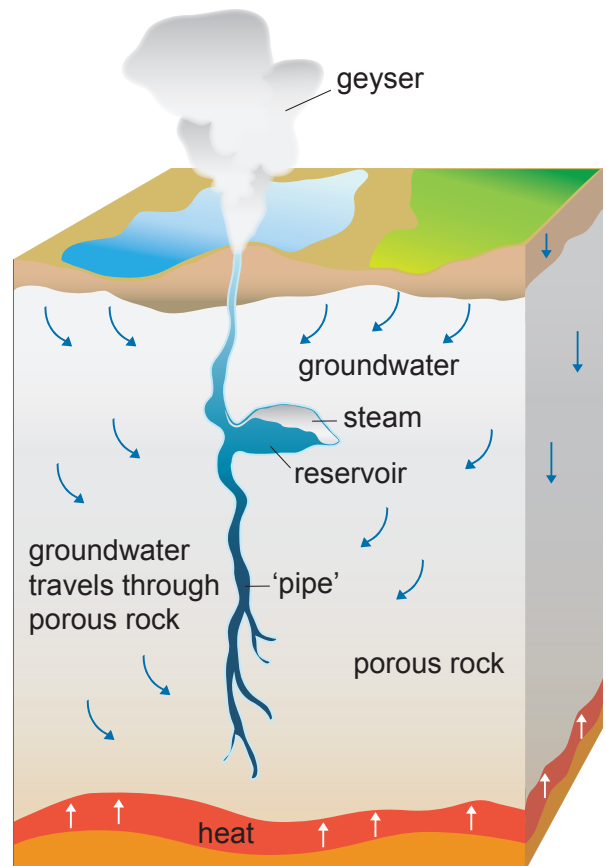
How do geysers work?

Geysers only form under very specific conditions. There must be ample groundwater; an underground heat source; and a 'plumbing system' made up of reservoirs and vertical passages or 'pipes' through which heated water travels on its way to the Earth's surface.

Cool water on the Earth's surface trickles down through porous rock. As it approaches the heat source (hot rocks or a magma chamber) it is heated to extremely high temperatures and starts to rise through a 'pipe'. The water would usually turn to steam but its depth, plus the weight of cooler water above it, creates what is called a *confining pressure* that prevents the superheated water from boiling and turning to steam. As the water rises this pressure lessens and steam finally forms and is trapped in the reservoir. Over time the pressure in the reservoir continues to build until the steam forces the water upwards through the passage to the surface of the Earth, where it erupts through a vent in a spectacular column of steaming water.

Where are geysers found?

Geysers are rare, with only around 1000 active worldwide. They occur in the United States (US), Russia, Chile, New Zealand and Iceland. Some erupt almost predictably in cycles of minutes, hours or days, and some have years between eruptions. The tallest active geyser in the world is Steamboat Geyser in Yellowstone National Park (US) which can shoot water more than 90 metres into the air. Unfortunately, it has only done so five times from 2003 to 2013.



The 'plumbing system' of a geyser



Strokkur Geyser in Iceland

Looking back



Even before I opened my eyes I could tell that things had not gone completely to plan. My whole body seemed to hum with pain but in a distant, subdued way that made me feel cushioned, as though I was floating above it. Not altogether unpleasant actually. I was clearly breathing and could feel my legs, so that was good. Mum always says you should look for the positives. I felt weirdly calm just lying there and it never dawned on me to try and get up. That was probably a good thing of course, because I might have caused even more damage.

I would have landed flat on my back if it hadn't been for my backpack. As it was I lay slumped, legs splayed out before me, supported by my trusty just-in-case raincoat and my packed lunch. Just as I became aware of how unnaturally silent everything was, the silence faded and was replaced with fuzzy white noise as if a foggy layer of cotton wool filled my head. Real noises gradually crept in, cockatoos screeching and the steady electric hum of the cicadas. Then one noise broke away from the others, clarifying as it seemed to get louder and louder and more and more insistent with every repetition. Eventually, as though it had broken through some gauzy bubble into my brain, the sound morphed itself into my name and I marvelled at the fact that I hadn't recognised it before.

Nick sounded so stressed out. His voice seemed a long way up and squinting as I was, into the sun, I couldn't make him out. There were shades of green as far as the eye could see, broken here and there by solid slabs of grey rock. Gnarled gum trees reached out from the rock face as though they were hanging on by sheer force of will. Without doubt an incredibly challenging climb. My eyes scaled all the way to the top. How was I going to get out?

I concentrated hard on Nick's voice in an attempt to remain calm.

He was saying the same thing over and over—'Help is on its way Ollie, everything will be ok!'

I concentrated hard on believing him but, to tell the truth, it wasn't until I heard the unmistakable sound of a helicopter drawing near that I really did.

One man's trash ...

The philosophy known as Freeganism comes from a very challenging idea for a consumer-oriented society. That idea is: we already have enough.

Economists can often be heard to fret on TV that 'the economy grew at a slower than expected rate last year'. But why are we so fixated on growth? The economy grows when we manufacture and sell more things. In a society already rich in 'things', how can we possibly justify making and buying more and more? According to the Freegans, our society's horrifyingly simple answer to that question is to *waste* what we already have by discarding it.

That growth and waste go hand in hand should not be controversial to anyone familiar with marketing. Last year's hottest mobile phone looks old and outdated compared to this year's model, doesn't it? And who would wear baggy jeans anymore when skinny jeans are so clearly in? This marketing phenomenon is called 'perceived obsolescence'. It relies on the idea that what is old feels inadequate or unusable, in order to encourage people to purchase replacements for perfectly good things that they already have.

As a remedy, Freegan communities consciously practise habits of non-consumption. Freegan behaviour can range from simply sharing tools, clothes or equipment between neighbours and friends, to the radical practice of 'dumpster diving'. This refers to seeking out waste food discarded by grocers and supermarkets because of cosmetic imperfections like a dented tin or a spot on the skin of an otherwise good apple.

Although making their next meal from 'rescued' food may not suit everyone, the essence of the Freegan message—to waste less, and to want less—is one worth holding on to.



Into the blue

The Blue Mountains

Above the ashes straight and tall,
Through ferns with moisture dripping,
I climb beneath the sandstone wall,
My feet on mosses slipping.

Like ramparts round the valley's edge
The tinted cliffs are standing,
With many a broken wall and ledge,
And many a rocky landing.

And round about their rugged feet
Deep ferny dells are hidden
In shadowed depths, whence dust and heat
Are banished and forbidden.

The stream that, crooning to itself,
Comes down a tireless rover,
Flows calmly to the rocky shelf,
And there leaps bravely over.

Now pouring down, now lost in spray
When mountain breezes sally,
The water strikes the rock midway,
And leaps into the valley.

Now in the west the colours change,
The blue with crimson blending;
Behind the far Dividing Range,
The sun is fast descending.

And mellowed day comes o'er the place,
And softens ragged edges;
The rising moon's great placid face
Looks gravely o'er the ledges.

Henry Lawson

A novel view

From Charles Darwin's diary entry about his visit to the Blue Mountains in 1836.

'About a mile & (a) half from this place there is a view, exceedingly well worth visiting. Following down a little valley & its tiny rill of water, suddenly & without any preparation, through the trees, which border the pathway, an immense gulf is seen at the depth of perhaps 1500 ft beneath one's feet. Walking a few yards farther, one stands on the brink of a great precipice. Below is the grand bay or gulf, for I know not what other name to give it, thickly covered with forest. The point of view is situated as it were at the head of the Bay, for the line of cliff diverges away on each side, showing headland, behind headland, as on a bold Sea coast.

... The class of view was to me quite novel & certainly magnificent.'



AN APOLOGY

to our fellow Australians from the people of Tasmania

Today, Tasmania was announced as one of Lonely Planet's Top 10 Regions to Visit in 2015. In fact we came 4th. In the world. And until commercial space travel becomes a reality, you could say Tassie is the 4th most recommended place in the universe.

SORRY AUSTRALIA

While this is an achievement many would be proud of, we feel we let down the country. You see we are the only Australian region in the top 10. In fact, we are the only place in Australia that made any of Lonely Planet's Top 10 lists for the upcoming year. Be that as it may we think we owe it to our fellow statesmen to find out why we weren't *numero uno*.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

It's a question that has left us a little confused. You see these types of accolades are nothing new to us. For example, our Bay of Fires was named 'hottest' destination on the planet.

In the words of Lonely Planet, the largest publisher of travel guides in the world, "**The diversity of offerings from Tasmania's plate may require multiple helpings.**"

We couldn't agree more.

Our culinary delights are the pride of the state and the envy of others, with the majority of our food bred, grown or caught within an oyster shell throw of where it's prepared and served.

So if it's not the food, is it the air down here? Well it's been scientifically proven that ours is amongst the cleanest in the world*. Okay, maybe it's our history. Colourful, yes. Controversial, definitely. Probably why we're home to more than half of Australia's World Heritage Listed Convict Sites.

On our land you can find four of the 8 Great Walks of Australia. In our seas, the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) recently reported an influx of NSW octopuses travelling down to breed here rather than in their own backyard.

There's also '**super-cool**' Hobart (their words, not ours), coincidentally one of Lonely Planet's 'Top 10 Cities to Visit' last year. We could go on and on but we don't want to come across as sore losers.

But we do want to apologise that we weren't higher up the list: a decision that has left us and our visitors baffled.

RIGHTING THE WRONG

To make things right, we're offering you the chance to see for yourself what one of the world's most desirable regions is really like. Stay with us for 3 nights and pay only \$385, for accommodation and car hire.

While the Lonely Planet judges have made up their minds, perhaps we can sway yours. And when the judges do come back we're certain they won't make the same mistake twice.

*The not so grim Cape Grim Gas Data July 2014 - CSIRO

Tasmania

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover

Surfer on board (wetsuit) image © Grace Lane Photography

The Terracotta Army

Terracotta soldiers in pits image © Imagemore Co., Ltd./Corbis

Terracotta soldiers and horses image © Ocean/Corbis

The Great Blondin

Photograph courtesy of Gloria Oh

The wave

Surfer on board (T-shirt) image © Grace Lane Photography

Into the blue

Poem *The Blue Mountains* by Henry Lawson 1888.

Diary extract from *Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited During the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle Round the World Under the Command of Captain Fitz Roy, R.N.* by Charles Darwin. First published May, 1860. This edition published by John Murray, London, 1913.

An apology

Text © Jim Jam Ideas and Tourism Tasmania

The materials included in the NAPLAN stimulus magazine are intended to engage students and assess their literacy skills. Any views or opinions expressed in these test materials do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of ACARA.

