THE BIG ISSUE CLASSROOM

RELEVANCE TO ENGLISH
Levels 7 & 8

The Big Issue Classroom employs disadvantaged Australians to share their story with school students. Our one-hour workshops are co-presented by a trained facilitator and a ‘guest speaker’ who has experienced homelessness. The workshops are valuable tools that can be integrated into curriculum and act as a useful reference point for a unit of study.

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<th>LEVEL DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>THE BIG ISSUE CLASSROOM ‘DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HOMELESSNESS AND DISADVANTAGE’</th>
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<td>In Years 7 and 8, students communicate with peers, teachers, individuals, groups and community members in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments. They experience learning in familiar and unfamiliar contexts that relate to the school curriculum, local community, regional and global contexts.</td>
<td>The Big Issue is a nationally renowned social enterprise, actively engaging the community to resolve homelessness in Australia. The Big Issue Classroom provides students with insights into The Big Issue as an organisation and provides a context for students to then engage with The Big Issue magazine as a text. The Big Issue Classroom workshops are interactive, and allow students to engage with each other, the facilitator, and a person who has experienced homelessness, learning about their local community. Workshops can be delivered online or ‘face-to-face’.</td>
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Literary texts that support and extend students in Years 7 and 8 as independent readers are drawn from a range of realistic, fantasy, speculative fiction and historical genres and involve some challenging and unpredictable plot sequences and a range of non-stereotypical characters. These texts explore themes of interpersonal relationships and ethical dilemmas within real-world and fictional settings and represent a variety of perspectives. Informative texts present technical and content information from various sources about specialised topics.

Following the ‘Discussions about Homelessness and Disadvantage’ workshop, teachers can access lesson ideas and worksheets. These have been designed to help students:
- engage with The Big Issue magazine as a text;
- reflect on the guest speaker narrative heard in the workshop;
- develop their own writing in response to material presented in the workshop.

The Big Issue magazine (established in 1996) is published fortnightly and is available in hard copy or online.

Each edition of the magazine contains a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, written from a variety of perspectives and reaching across different genres. These texts explore themes including interpersonal relationships and ethical dilemmas. A highlight of each year is The Big Issue fiction edition.

Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts, for example narratives, procedures, performances, reports and discussions, and are beginning to create literary analyses and transformations of texts.

The workshop can be used as an inspiration point for students to create their own texts.