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CHAPTER 2

Introduction to Unit 2A— Language and Action

Content

This unit offers you the opportunity to explore how you can use language to have an effect on what happens in your world.

How can I affect what happens?

You live in a democracy (a word that comes from the Greek, meaning 'people-rule' or 'government by the people') which means that you can have an influence on the way your society works and you can express your views on any issue. Well, almost any issue—you can't incite a riot or disturb the peace ... Can you think of any other things you are not allowed to say or do in Australia? Why are these things not allowed?



How can language produce change?

‘*The pen is mightier than the sword.*’

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Unit 2A Description

The recommended focus for this unit is language and action. Students develop their language skills by exploring issues of concern or controversy, currently, or in the past, and examining the way language is used in relation to these topics. They study the way in which language can be used to influence attitudes and bring about action or change, as well as ways in which such uses of language can be challenged and/or resisted.

As part of this topic, students consider the relationship between language and power. Students learn how power relationships are represented through language, how particular uses of language can be empowering or disempowering and how they can empower themselves through language.

They apply language skills with the aim of affecting attitudes and actions, using a variety of genres and taking account of different contexts, purposes and audiences.



What are you being asked to do? Choose a topic or subject and explain your ideas to your partner.

ACTIVITY

Understanding the unit description

Re-read the unit description and think about what it is asking of you. Highlight any words and phrases you need to know more about. Write down your initial ideas about what this unit is asking you to do. Discuss your ideas with a partner. Use the glossary to help you with any difficult words or phrases.

Clarify the three key concepts that you will find recur throughout your studies in English:

- Audience
- Purpose
- Context.

Consult the glossary so you know what these terms mean.

With these ideas in mind, focus on that important phrase in the unit description: ‘[Students] *apply language skills with the aim of affecting attitudes and actions, using a variety of genres and taking account of different contexts, purposes and audiences.*’

Write a journal entry or a series of paragraphs to explain your ideas.

