The barbecue

Last Sunday at our barbecue
While blue smoke rose in curls and wisps
My dad played chef in hat and coat
Converting chops to carbon crisps.

Our hungry guests were gathered round
With comments of profundity
About the apron that disguised
His evident rotundity.

The folding table standing near
Was piled with salads, cheese and bread,
With butter, sauce and bottled beer,
So all was ready for the spread.

But Bumblefoot, our dog, of course—
A clumsy, sausage-snatching hound—
Knocked out the trestle table legs
So meat and salads strewed the ground.

Dad blindly grabbed the hot-plate then
To save its equilibrium,
And with a roar of pain and rage
Began to barbecue his thumb.

The outcome, as you well may guess,
Was that we starved and mourned our plight,
While Bumblefoot cleaned up the mess
And burped in ecstasy all night.

By Colin Thiele
From Poems in My Luggage (Omnibus/Puffin)
Teaching notes for
The Barbecue

OTHER RESOURCES
Dictionaries.
Art materials.

INTRODUCING THE UNIT
This poem recounts an amusing incident at a barbecue. Children from backgrounds where barbecues are not common social events may wish to share their stories of other social activities.

THE AUSSIE BARBECUE
Encourage students to share any experiences they may have had at barbecues, particularly any humorous incidents.

STORYBOARD THE STORY
Ask students to create a comic strip version of the story that is to be used as a shooting script for a video or film. Help students to identify the main action in each stanza that is to be used as the focus of each picture. Help them to decide whether the drawing would be a close-up, mid-shot or long shot of the action. Allow time for students to talk about their images and encourage them to share the finished storyboards.

CURLS AND WISPS
Encourage students to be innovative and imaginative in their interpretations of these images. Try to arrange a time for sharing of these visual images.

BUMBLEFOOT
Encourage students to empathise with the dog and to see it from his perspective. Ask them to consider whether he deliberately knocked over the table or whether it was accidental. Challenge them to consider how the answer to this question will affect their view of the dog and how they will write the story from his viewpoint. Allow time for planning, drafting and revising of the work. Perhaps you could organise a sharing time of the finished versions of the story.

FOLLOW-UP/EXTENSION
Have students write their own barbecue poems, or create an anthology of barbecue poems or poems about social events.
Barbecues are an important part of the Australian lifestyle. Sometimes barbecues happen in the backyard and sometimes they happen at picnic areas. Most people in Australia have ‘barbecue stories’ to tell about when something funny happened or things went wrong. Get together in a small group and share any barbecue or picnic stories that you may have to tell. Write the funniest or the most unusual in the space below.
**Storyboard the story**

Read Colin Thiele’s barbecue poem. Talk with a friend about the barbecue that the poet describes. Have you ever been at one like this?

In the spaces below, create a storyboard to tell the story. Draw an image for each stanza.
**Curls and wisps**

In this poem there are a number of striking images. Some of these are identified for you below. Talk about these images with a partner.

Draw a series of pictures to show your view of the images in the poem.

- blue smoke rose in curls and wisps
- converting chops to carbon crisps
- sausage snatching hound
- meat and salads strewed the ground
- began to barbecue his thumb
- burped in ecstasy all night

Share your drawings with a partner. Talk about how you have presented these images.

**NA 3.2 NSW 2.3** Recognises that certain types of spoken texts are associated with particular audiences and purposes.

**NA 3.5 NSW 2.5** Reads a wide range of written and visual texts and interprets and discusses relationships between ideas, information and events.
Bumblefoot

Talk with a partner about the ‘sausage-snatching dog’. How do you think the dog felt about the barbecue?

Imagine that you are Bumblefoot. Tell your version of the incident. You may want to write your version of the story as a poem in four line stanzas with some rhyming lines.

Work on rough paper first and then publish your final version in the space provided.

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NA 3.2 NSW 2.3 Recognises that certain types of spoken texts are associated with particular audiences and purposes.

NA 3.9 Experiments with interrelating ideas and information when writing about familiar topics within a small range of text types.