



What do you think?

Overview of the unit

This unit provides students with a range of opportunities to consider and formulate opinions about how to reduce road fatalities and casualties among young people.

Although the Learning Activities can be used individually, they build on each beginning with an activity that is based around the oral presentation of opinions. The final activity requires students to read and write an editorial.

Initial stimulus material for three of the activities can be found in the newspaper, *Crash 'n' Burn*, which accompanies this resource. However, teachers and students are encouraged to use a range of material and newspaper texts as stimulus.

Purpose

Road safety:

This unit is designed to raise student's awareness of the number of young people involved in fatal and casualty crashes and to consider the reasons for this and what can be done to reduce the number.

VCAL:

This unit focuses on the development of literacy skills, both reading and writing and oral communication. In particular the activities focus on:

- developing awareness of audience and purpose in all texts
- developing the ability to critically analyse and assess opinions, both written and oral
- identifying and using persuasive techniques
- understanding the relationship between facts and opinions
- developing arguments based on evidence, not just opinions
- understanding the structure of texts and using this knowledge to critique texts and to produce effective texts.

Teacher information

Despite significant road toll reductions since 1990, young drivers continue to have more casualty crashes than any other group of drivers on the road. Each year around 40 to 50 young drivers (18 to 25 years of age) are killed, 61 are involved in fatal crashes and over 4,000 are involved in casualty crashes⁷. More young people die from road crashes than any other cause.

Crash risk reduces as driving experience increases, and as drivers mature they become less likely to engage in risky driving behaviours.

Key safety issues for young drivers are:

- **inexperience.** Crashes are most likely to occur in the first 6 months of driving when the new driver is less experienced and unused to the unsupervised driving task

⁷ Casualty crashes are those that result in fatality, serious or minor injury and have been reported by Police.

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- **drink driving.** Alcohol is involved in 21% of deaths for 18 to 20 year old drivers and in 50% of 21 to 25 year old driver deaths
- **poor driving records and speeding.** Young drivers who commit traffic offences, particularly for speeding, have an increased crash risk of 65%
- **mobile phone use.** Mobile phone use, including hands free, increases crash risk by 25%
- **poor vehicle safety.** Young drivers are more likely to drive smaller, older cars which are less crashworthy and have fewer safety features
- **late night driving.** Crash risk for Probationary Licensed drivers is much higher when they drive between 10pm and 6am
- **multiple passengers.** The rate of fatal and serious injury crashes is increased when Probationary Licensed drivers carry two or more passengers
Half of fatal crashes for first year drivers occur late at night or with multiple passengers
- **the role of parents/carers.** Parents are powerful role models and can influence children's driving behaviour, driving experience and compliance with licence restrictions.

It is assumed that this unit would be undertaken in conjunction with other units related to road safety. For example *Safely, safely* and *Only a little bit over*.

Resource requirements

Unit material	Crash 'n' Burn Handout 1: Structure of letters to the editor Handout 2: Writing a letter to the editor Handout 3: A bit about editorials Handout 4: Writing an editorial Worksheet 1: Their say Worksheet 2: Reading an editorial
Published material	Range of local and state newspapers.
People	Access to people of different ages, occupations, etc.
Facilities & equipment	Access to desktop publishing, presentation and word processing software.

Alignment of the unit to VCAL

VCAL units

Reading and Writing

Oral Communication



VCAL level

Activities in this unit are predominately focused at **Foundation** and **Intermediate** levels. Students working at Intermediate level should produce more complex written texts and work more independently.

Learning outcomes

Activity	Units and learning outcomes
1. Opinions	<p>Oral Communication Skills Foundation: 4. Oracy for exploring issues and problem solving: Use and respond to spoken language in discussions to explore issues or solve problems on a familiar topic</p> <p>Oral Communication Skills Intermediate: 4. Oracy for exploring issues and problem solving: Use and respond to spoken language in discussions to explore issues or solve problems</p>
2. Vox pop	<p>Reading and Writing Skills Foundation: 3. Writing for knowledge: Write a short report or explanatory text on a familiar subject</p>
3. Your say	<p>Reading and Writing Skills Foundation: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a short persuasive and/or argumentative text expressing a point of view on a familiar subject 8. Reading for public debate: Demonstrate that meaning has been gained from reading a simple persuasive or discursive text on a familiar subject</p> <p>Reading and Writing Skills Intermediate: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a persuasive, argumentative or discursive text</p>
4. Point of view	<p>Reading and Writing Skills Foundation: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a short persuasive and/or argumentative text expressing a point of view on a familiar subject 8. Reading for public debate: Demonstrate that meaning has been gained from reading a simple persuasive or discursive text on a familiar subject</p> <p>Reading and Writing Skills Intermediate: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a persuasive, argumentative or discursive text</p>

Please note: The activities **support** the learning outcomes listed but may not cover all the assessment criteria/elements. Please check the relevant Curriculum Planning Guide to ensure all assessment criteria/elements are covered. For assessment purposes, in the Personal Development Skills, Reading and Writing and Work Related Skills Units, all the elements of a learning outcome must be covered in the one assessment task. Where an activity doesn't cover all the elements, the activity can be used to build the student's portfolio of evidence.



Assessment

The activities in this unit have been designed as learning activities. However, documentation can be used to build a portfolio of evidence to be used for the assessment of relevant learning outcomes.

Evidence may include:

- teacher checklist and observation
- written or oral response to texts
- written products e.g. vox pops, letter to the editor, editorial.

Sample assessment record sheet

See next page.



Sample assessment record sheet: Foundation

Unit name: **What do you think?**

VCAL Level: **Foundation**

Student name:

Form/Group:

Unit Outline: This unit is designed to raise student's awareness of the number of young people involved in fatal and casualty crashes and to consider the reasons for this and what can be done to reduce the number. The purpose of the unit is to develop students' literacy skills, reading and writing and oral communication. The focus of the activities are to:

- develop awareness of audience and purpose in all texts
- develop the ability to critically analyse and assess opinions, both written and oral
- identify and use persuasive techniques
- understand the relationship between facts and opinions
- develop arguments based on evidence, not just opinions
- understand the structure of texts and to use this knowledge to critique texts and to produce effective texts.

Learning outcomes and performance:

Activity	Learning Outcomes	Performance	Evidence/comments
1. Opinions	Oral Communication Skills Foundation: 4. Oracy for exploring issues and problem solving: Use and respond to spoken language in discussions to explore issues or solve problems on a familiar topic		
2. Vox pop	Reading and Writing Skills Foundation: 3. Writing for knowledge: Write a short report or explanatory text on a familiar subject		

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<p>3. Your say</p>	<p>Reading and Writing Skills Foundation: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a short persuasive and/or argumentative text expressing a point of view on a familiar subject</p> <p>8. Reading for public debate: Demonstrate that meaning has been gained from reading a simple persuasive or discursive text on a familiar subject</p>		
<p>4. Point of view</p>	<p>Reading and Writing Skills Foundation: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a short persuasive and/or argumentative text expressing a point of view on a familiar subject</p> <p>8. Reading for public debate: Demonstrate that meaning has been gained from reading a simple persuasive or discursive text on a familiar subject</p>		

Unit performance codes: Y = Yet to do; NYC = Not yet completed; CS = Completed satisfactorily

Teacher's signature: Date:

Evidence of successful completion of the unit could include:

- teacher checklist and observation
- written or oral response to texts
- written products e.g. vox pops, letter to the editor, editorial.



Sample assessment record sheet: Intermediate

Unit name: **What do you think?**

VCAL Level: **Intermediate**

Student name:

Form/Group:

Unit Outline: This unit is designed to raise student's awareness of the number of young people involved in fatal and casualty crashes and to consider the reasons for this and what can be done to reduce the number. The purpose of the unit is to develop students' literacy skills, reading and writing and oral communication. The focus of the activities are to:

- develop awareness of audience and purpose in all texts
- develop the ability to critically analyse and assess opinions, both written and oral
- identify and use persuasive techniques
- understand the relationship between facts and opinions
- develop arguments based on evidence, not just opinions
- understand the structure of texts and to use this knowledge to critique texts and to produce effective texts.

Learning outcomes and performance:

Activity	Learning Outcomes	Performance	Evidence/comments
1. Opinions	Oral Communication Skills Intermediate: 4. Oracy for exploring issues and problem solving: Use and respond to spoken language in discussions to explore issues or solve problems		
2. Vox pop	Foundation level only		
3. Your say	Reading and Writing Skills Intermediate: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a persuasive, argumentative or discursive text		

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4. Point of view	Reading and Writing Skills Intermediate: 4. Writing for public debate: Write a persuasive, argumentative or discursive text		
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Unit performance codes: Y = Yet to do; NYC = Not yet completed; CS = Completed satisfactorily

Teacher's signature:

Date:

Evidence of successful completion of the unit could include:

- teacher checklist and observation
- written or oral response to texts
- written products e.g. letter to the editor, editorial.



Activity 1: Opinions

In this activity students share ideas and discuss how to reduce casualty crashes involving young people. Students work both as a whole group and in small groups.

What to do

Introduce the topic of how to reduce casualty crashes involving young people by writing at the top of a whiteboard "Each year around 40 to 50 young drivers are killed, 61 are involved in fatal crashes and over 4,000 are involved in casualty crashes. How can casualty crashes involving young people be reduced?"

First initiate discussion about why so many young people are involved in casualty crashes.

Ask students the following questions:

1. What is a casualty crash?
2. What can be done to reduce casualty crashes amongst young people? Aim for 6 to 10 ideas.
3. Why would these ideas reduce the rate and number of casualty crashes?

Note students' ideas on a whiteboard, grouping similar ideas.

Ideas to reduce casualty crashes	Why would this reduce casualty crashes?
1. Don't let young people drive so fast.	
2. Give young people a reward for every month they drive without having any type of crash.	
3. Make yo 	

Students work in small groups to discuss and decide which would be the two most effective ideas and why they would be effective. Students working at Intermediate level should undertake some research to find information and ideas to support their opinions.

One member from each group should write down the ideas the group considers to be the most effective and the reasons why they consider the ideas would be effective. Another group member should present the group's ideas to the class.

The teacher should write the ranking given by each group against the idea.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



The aim is to produce a ranked list of the ideas students consider to be most effective.

Students (or the groups) who disagree with the ranked list should be encouraged to argue why an alternative idea should be included in the list and/or why one idea should be ranked higher than another.

Student role and responsibilities in relation to the activities

Contribute to class and small group discussions.

Listen to the opinions of others.

Level of teacher support

Facilitate discussion.

Provide encouragement.

Key questions

What are casualty crashes?

Why are so many young people involved in casualty crashes?

Why is it important to have reasons to support ideas?

How do facts and information support ideas?

Extension activity

Students write one or two paragraphs describing the ideas they think would be the most effective in combating road crashes for young people and explaining why they would be effective.

Assessment

This is a learning activity. To use it as an assessment task you would need to collect evidence such as:

- teacher checklist
- notes from the group members that wrote down the group's ideas and reasons for their ideas
- video of discussion.



Activity 2: Vox pop

In this activity students read the vox pop section in the *Crash 'n' Burn* newspaper before producing their own vox pop on the same or a related topic about safe driving and young people. Students' vox pops should be produced using an appropriate software package. Students may work individually or in small groups.

What to do

Students will initially need to:

- consider what is vox pop
- look at different examples of vox pops.

Further discussion may cover the:

- purpose of vox pop
- what makes some vox pops more interesting to read than others
- how vox pops are presented
- what information is included about the person interviewed.

Before beginning to seek opinions for the vox pop, students will need to decide:

- the question they will ask
- who they will interview, in terms of age, gender, occupation, where they live, etc
- how many people they will interview – it may be better to interview more people than they need to so they can choose the most interesting or controversial opinions
- how much and what information they will collect about the people they interview
- if they will take a photo of the people interviewed.

Students will also need to consider who will be the audience for the vox pop and the most appropriate way to present the vox pop for the intended audience.

Students should undertake the interviews and prepare the vox pop. Given the audience, they will need to decide which opinions to include. The vox pop should be presented to the class, published in a class/school newspaper or as a web page.

Finally students should discuss if the method of presentation and content was appropriate for the audience and evaluate its effectiveness in relation to this. This could be done through class discussion, voting for the most effective vox pop, self evaluation or peer evaluation.

Student role and responsibilities in relation to the activities

Contribute to class and small group discussions.

Listen to the opinions of others.

Make decisions about who and what to ask and about how to present the material.



Level of teacher support

Facilitate discussion.

Provide encouragement.

Technical support as required.

Key questions

How can casualty crashes involving young people be reduced?

What is the purpose of vox pop?

Who is likely to read vox pop?

How could vox pop best be presented for the audience?

Was the chosen method of presentation mode and content appropriate for the audience? How could it have been improved?

Extension activities

Vox pops could also be presented in an audio or audio-visual format.

Intermediate students should develop a survey to gauge the opinion of others about how to decrease the rate of road crashes that young people are involved in. They will need to consider if they are interested in the opinions of people of different age, gender, occupations, etc.

The results of the survey should be presented in a report.

Assessment

This is a learning activity. To use it as an assessment task you would need to collect evidence such as:

- teacher observation and checklist
- the product - vox pop.



Activity 3: Your say

What to do

The *Crash 'n' Burn* newspaper contains two letters to the editor which express opinions about restrictions for P-plate drivers. Students should read these letters before writing a letter expressing their own opinion in a letter to the editor.

Prior to reading the letters to the editor 'No social life' and 'No public holiday ban for P-plate drivers' in *Crash 'n' Burn*, students should discuss why restrictions should be placed on P-plate drivers.

Discussion may also centre around:

- why people write letters to the editor
- why papers publish letters to the editor
- who reads letters to the editor.

It may also be beneficial for students to look at other examples of letters to the editor in the local and state newspapers.

Handout 1: Structure of letters to the editor shows students how a letter to the editor is structured. This will help them when they complete *Worksheet 1: Their say* and when they write a letter to the editor.

After reading the letters to the editor, students should complete *Worksheet 1: Their say*.

Students will write a letter to the editor about an issue to do with road safety and young people. Their letter should follow the structure shown in Handout 1 and they should try and persuade those that read the letter to agree with their opinion.

Handout 2: Writing a letter to the editor, suggests a process students can use when writing the letter to the editor. It would be beneficial to go through this process with the students.

The final letter to the editor could be sent to the local newspaper or could be published in a school or class newsletter.

Student role and responsibilities in relation to the activities

Contribute to class and small group discussions.

Ask for assistance when required.

Level of teacher support

Facilitate discussion.

Provide encouragement.

Provide a range of examples of letters to the editor.

Provide assistance when requested.



Key questions

What is the value of placing restrictions on P-plate drivers?

Why do people write letters to the editor?

What format do letters to the editor follow? Why?

Do letters to the editor help to raise awareness about issues?

Extension activity

Students may write a letter to the editor about another subject – one they feel passionate about.

Assessment

This is a learning activity. To use it as an assessment task you would need to collect evidence such as:

- Worksheet 1 completed
- draft with edits and the final version of a letter to the editor.

Students working at Intermediate level should work more independently and write a longer letter to the editor which includes more than one argument, evidence for the arguments and more than one persuasive device. Students may need to undertake research to find evidence for arguments.



Activity 4: Point of view

This activity is focused around reading and writing an editorial.

What to do

Introduce editorials by having a range of newspapers containing editorials available for students to read.

Discussion may centre around:

- the purpose of editorials
- whose opinion is being expressed in an editorial
- who reads editorials.

Students should read the editorial in *Crash 'n' Burn* and then discuss if they agree with the opinions expressed and the suggested ideas to cut the road toll.

Ask students to identify how the writer of the editorial tries to persuade the reader to agree with them. This can lead to a discussion and work on language features and persuasive techniques.

Handout 3: A bit about editorials will provide information about the structure of editorials.

Following discussion about editorials and the issues involved in 'School based driving lessons the way forward', students should complete *Worksheet 2: Reading an editorial*.

Students will write an editorial expressing their own opinion about one of the following issues:

- restricting P-platers – it's not fair!
- it's the driving culture, not a youth problem
- tackling the crash casualty rate of young people
- young drivers: offer positive incentives not punishment.

Handout 4: Writing an editorial, suggests a process students can use when writing an editorial. It would be beneficial to go through this process with the students.

The final editorials could be published in a school or class newsletter.

Student role and responsibilities in relation to the activities

Contribute to class and small group discussions.

Ask for assistance when required.

Level of teacher support

Facilitate discussion.

Provide encouragement.

Provide a range of examples of editorials.

Provide assistance when requested.



Key questions

What is the purpose of editorials?

Whose opinion is being expressed in an editorial?

Who reads editorials?

Do editorials affect readers' opinions?

Assessment

This is a learning activity. To use it as an assessment task you would need to collect evidence such as:

- Worksheet 2 completed
- draft with edits and the final version of the editorial.

Students working at Intermediate level should work more independently, write a longer editorial which includes at least two arguments and persuasive devices. It should also include reasons for, or evidence to support the opinion.

It is likely that students will need to undertake research to find supporting arguments and evidence.



Handout 1: Structure of letters to the editor

Letters to the editor are often structured in a similar way. The letter below is short but it still follows the standard structure.

Killer highway	←	Title of the letter. The newspaper will give the letter a title, not the author of the letter.
I am writing to point out the appalling state of the Reed Highway. Three fatal crashes have occurred this year on the stretch between Stoggsville and Hampton Hill.	←	Issue or problem
The road is in terrible condition and extremely dangerous.	←	Writer's opinion
There are large ruts making it very difficult to drive on. There are also big trees on the edge of the road at bends.	←	Reasons for the opinion
How many more deaths have to occur before the Council will do something about it?	←	Sometimes a letter, like this one, will finish with a solution to the problem. At other times the solution is implied.
<i>Helen Burroughs, Stoggsville</i>	←	Who wrote the letter



Handout 2: Writing a letter to the editor

No one picks up a pen and writes the perfect article or letter. There are certain stages every writer goes through. You can follow these stages to write a letter to the editor.

Stage 1: Planning and organising

Most people need to plan what they are going to write and to organise the information, ideas and arguments they have. This can be done in different ways. Some people jot down a few ideas of what they are going to write about. Others write a detailed plan of what will go in each paragraph. And others write down the main ideas and then the ideas that support the main ones.

There is no correct way to plan – you need to find a way that works for you.

Write a plan for your letter to the editor.

Stage 2: Drafting

The next stage is to write a draft.

Use your plan to write a draft of your letter to the editor.

- Check how a letter to the editor is structured.
- How are you trying to convince people to agree with your opinion?



Don't worry too much about spelling and punctuation. At this stage you need to get down your ideas and structure your letter. You can fix up the spelling and punctuation later.

You might like to show the draft to your teacher.

Stage 3: Editing

Now you need to edit your letter.

When you edit a letter to the editor, you need to check:

- your letter follows the structure of a letter to the editor
- you are saying what you want to say
- the language you are using is suitable for the people who will read it
- you have included arguments or reasons for your opinion
- you are trying to convince the people reading the letter to agree with you.

You may need to:

- change words
- move sentences or parts of them
- take out parts of sentences
- add extra information.

When you have done these things, then fix your spelling and punctuation. If you have trouble with spelling and punctuation, talk to your teacher.

Stage 4: The final version

You may need to draft and edit two or three times before you are happy with the final result.



Handout 3: A bit about editorials

Editorials are found in most newspapers. They present the opinion of the newspaper on a topic that the newspaper editor or management thinks needs to be debated. They often offer a solution to a problem or suggest the action that should be taken.

An editorial assumes the readers know the main facts of an event or an issue, so it doesn't provide detailed factual information or a summary of the issues. Editorials try to persuade the reader that the opinion expressed is right. The purpose of the text is to:

- promote debate about issues
- persuade the reader to agree with the opinion being expressed
- editorials are thought to influence people, because the editor is considered to be an important person in the community and many readers will agree with the editorial. Do you agree with this?

Editorials are usually structured in a particular way. Have a look at how the editorial below is structured.

<p>Freeway menace</p> <p>The government must find a way to stop people dropping objects from overpasses on to freeways.</p> <p>This week a stone was dropped onto a man's car on the Northern Freeway. It broke the windscreen and caused him to lose control of the car and swerve into the next lane, hitting a car and killing his girlfriend, a passenger in the front seat.</p> <p>Five years ago a teacher was killed when someone dropped a bottle from another overpass on the Southern Freeway.</p> <p>Other similar mindless acts have put motorists at risk or caused minor crashes, damaging property.</p> <p>Such a senseless waste of life and property must be stopped. As new freeways are built, overpasses must be enclosed and, in time, this must be extended to existing overpasses.</p>	<p>← Eye-catching heading</p> <p>← The introduction gives an overview of the editor's opinion and main argument.</p> <p>← The middle paragraphs give arguments and ideas and evidence to support the arguments. This editorial provides evidence that it is dangerous to throw or drop objects from freeway overpasses. No other arguments are used. In longer editorials other arguments and evidence would be given.</p> <p>← The editorial finishes with a recommendation for what the editor believes should be done.</p>
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Handout 4: Writing an editorial

Even experienced editors need to go through a number of steps before they are ready to have an editorial published. Try using these steps when you write your editorial.

Step 1: Planning and organising

You need to plan what you are going to write and to organise information, ideas and arguments. People do this differently. They:

- jot down a few ideas of what they are going to write about
- write a detailed plan of what will go in each paragraph
- write down the main ideas and then the ideas that support the main ones.

There is no correct way to plan and organise – you need to find a way that works for you.

Step 2: Drafting

The next stage is to write a draft.

Use your plan to write a draft of the editorial.

- Check how an editorial is structured and follow this structure.
- Think about how you will convince people to agree with your opinion.



At this stage you need to get down your ideas and structure them. You can fix up the spelling and punctuation later.

You might like to show the draft to your teacher.

Step 3: Editing

Now you need to edit the editorial.

When you edit a text you need to check:

- the structure is correct
- you are saying what you want to say
- the language you are using is suitable for the people who will read it
- you have included arguments or reasons for your opinion
- you are trying to convince the readers to agree with you.

You may need to:

- change words
- move sentences or parts of them
- take out parts of sentences
- add extra information.

When you have done these things, then fix your spelling and punctuation. If you have trouble with spelling and punctuation, talk to your teacher.

Step 4: The final version

You may need to draft and edit two or three times before you are happy with the final result.



Worksheet 1: Their say

After you have read the letters to the editor *No social life* and *No public holiday ban for P-plates*, complete the following table.

	No social life	No public holiday ban
What is the issue or problem?		
What is the writer's opinion?		
What is the reason for the writer's opinion		
Does the writer provide a solution to the problem? If so, what?		

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	No social life	No public holiday ban
How do you think the writers feel about the issue? Do you think they are angry, seriously concerned, upset, sarcastic?		
What makes you think they feel like this? You may find words or a sentence that show how they feel, or you may think the whole letter shows how they feel.		
Do you agree with the writer?		
Give 1 or 2 reasons why you agree or disagree with the writer.		



Worksheet 2: Reading an editorial

Read the editorial 'Schools based driving lessons the way forward' and complete the following table.



	Schools based driving lessons the way forward
What is the issue or problem?	
What is the editor's opinion?	
What are the reasons for the editor's opinion?	
What does the editor recommend should be done to solve the problem?	



	Schools based driving lessons the way forward
How does the editor try to get the reader to agree with his/her point of view?	
Do you agree with the editor's point of view?	
Give 1 or 2 reasons why you agree or disagree with the editor.	