Discuss and record any prior knowledge that the students have about the thylacine. Also record any questions that the students may have.

Give the students a text about the thylacine and have them read through it individually, then re-read and record their thinking and any questions that they may have raised. Ask the students to highlight important information, write any connections or inferences that they made and record emotional responses (if any) to the text. The students then write a summary of the article. **

The teachers chose to use two or three texts for this activity in order to cater for different reading levels within their classes. Some students were given graphic organisers to help them to sort and summarise the information.

Show the students images of Thylacines in order to build upon their schema. Also show images of zoo in Australia from the 1930’s as well as images of modern zoos so that the students can appreciate the difference between 1930 as they were, compared to 2000 today.

Provide the students with individual copies of two of the pictures that they have seen—one from a zoo in the 1930’s and one from a modern zoo. Allow time for the students to brainstorm describing words that fit each image. Allow one or two students to share some of their words. Record the responses on the board.

Explain to the students that they are going to write a paragraph describing each. Encourage the students to make their writing more interesting by choosing interesting words and using adverbs.

Have some students share their paragraphs and have the students offer feedback and suggestions.


After the initial reading, the students record responses to the text. In groups, the students list all the details that they can recall that ‘tell’ them that the story is set in the past. Report back to the class, record responses on an anchor chart.

Pose the question, ‘Is the snarer (Churchill) a villain? Complete a ‘value judgement’ activity based on this question (setting boundaries first). At the completion of the activity, the student record their individual responses to this question and give reasons for their opinions.

Look at the illustrations in the book ‘I Saw Nothing’. In groups, discuss and record answers to the following questions:

How do the images in the book portray the Thylacine?

Do the images convey a point of view or a voice? Do we ‘hear’ the Thylacine’s side of the story through the images?

How do the illustrations portray the Thylacine? Which images cause us to consider things that we may not have thought about on our own?

Give the students time to record their responses and allow individual students to share theirs.

Show the students the footage of the last thylacine in the Hobart Zoo at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odswge5onwY

During viewing, allow students to write down thoughts, feelings or phrases that occur to them while watching. Share responses. Students highlight those that they think are the most powerful. Together create a group poem using people’s best words and phrases. Poems can be any format and do not have to rhyme. Allow time to share drafts.

The teachers allowed the students to view this footage several times and played the song “In the Arms of the Angels” at the same time. This helped the students to consider things that we may not have thought about on our own.

Allow the students to share their poems. Display. **

**Overall, the teachers were really impressed by the quality of the poems produced by the students. Some extra vigilance was required in order to make sure that all of the students contributed to the finished product. The teachers used groups that contained a maximum of 6 people.