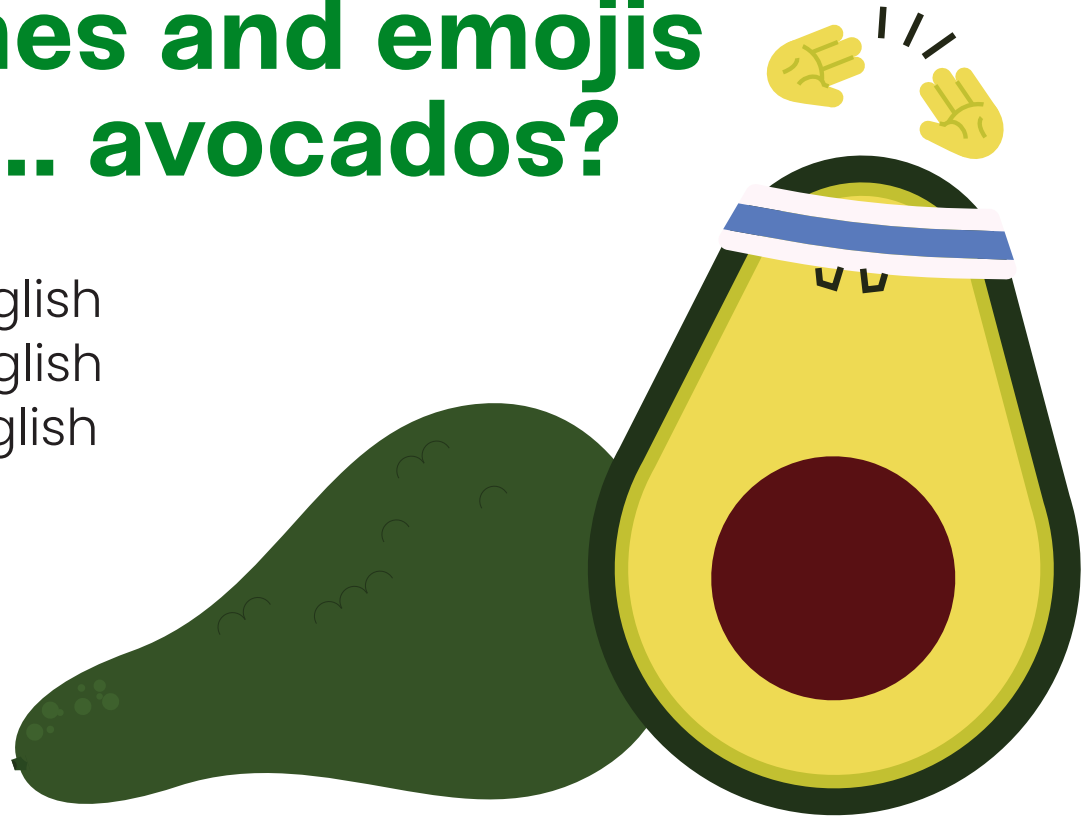


Memojicado!

Mememes and emojis and ... avocados?

Year 5 English
Year 6 English
Year 7 English



(English, Year 5, AC9E5LY01)

Describe the ways in which a text reflects the time and place in which it was created

(English, Year 5, AC9E5LY06)

Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts whose purposes may be imaginative, informative and persuasive, developing ideas using visual features, text structure appropriate to the topic and purpose, text connectives, expanded noun groups, specialist and technical vocabulary, and punctuation including dialogue punctuation

(English, Year 6, AC9E6LY01)

Examine texts including media texts that represent ideas and events, and identify how they reflect the context in which they were created

(English, Year 6, AC9E6LY03)

Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text, and engage and influence audiences

(English, Year 6, AC9E6LY06)

Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts whose purposes may be imaginative, informative and persuasive, using paragraphs, a variety of complex sentences, expanded verb groups, tense, topic-specific and vivid vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and visual features

(English, Year 7, AC9E7LA01)

Understand how language expresses and creates personal and social identities

(English, Year 7, AC9E7LY02)

Use interaction skills when discussing and presenting ideas and information including evaluations of the features of spoken texts

(English, Year 7, AC9E7LY03)

Analyse the ways in which language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose

(English, Year 7, AC9E7LY06)

Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts, selecting subject matter, and using text structures, language features, literary devices and visual features as appropriate to convey information, ideas and opinions in ways that may be imaginative, reflective, informative, persuasive and/or analytical

Memojicado!

Mememes and emojis and ... avocados?



Mememes and jokes in cultural context

In 2017 the world was rocked by the latest media trend: mememes about avocado on toast. But what makes a mememe – and what makes it funny anyway? This lesson looks into media literacy, social history and writing short silly stories about fruit'n veg.

Duration:

30–45 minutes

Location:

The classroom

Equipment:

Several examples of classroom-appropriate food mememes and jokes (see Teacher Resources for some ideas)

Students' writing notebooks or portfolios

Simple mememe-making or design software such as Canva or Doodlebuddy (or whatever your school uses and students are familiar with)

Notes:

Getting Started

🎧 Listen to **Episode 18 – Avocado**

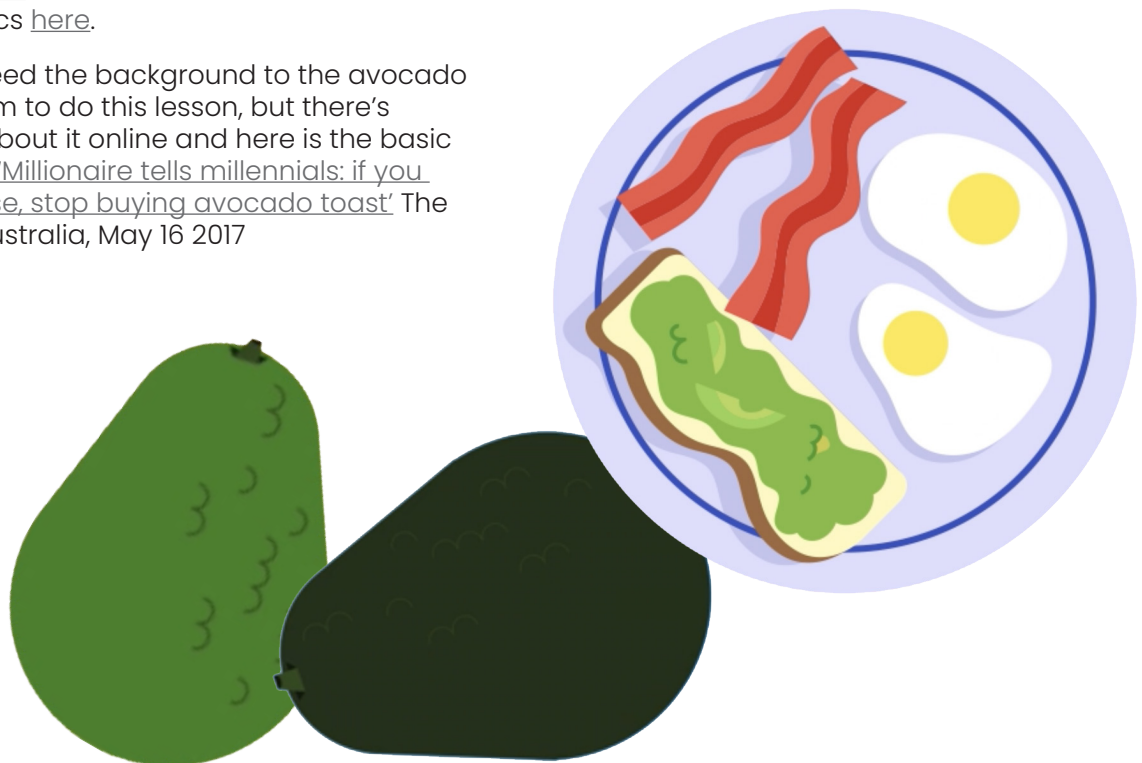


Teacher notes:

- Given that memes cover all kinds of humour, a lot of it not classroom-appropriate, it's best to choose any examples of memes you want to show rather than letting students go online to look for them. We found some food memes [here](#) and [here](#) and memes on various kid-friendly topics [here](#).
- You don't need the background to the avocado meme-storm to do this lesson, but there's quite a lot about it online and here is the basic origin story: ['Millionaire tells millennials: if you want a house, stop buying avocado toast'](#) The Guardian Australia, May 16 2017

Getting started:

- Replay some of the avocado jokes in this episode of Nomcast. Here are a couple of others:
 - ◇ 'What did the avocado half say to the other avocado half? Without you, I'm empty inside.'
 - ◇ 'What did the guy at the party say when he realized there was nothing left to dip his tortilla chip in?' – 'I've hit guac bottom.'
- Introduce the class to a few memes – especially ones about fruit or food items.
- Explore the creation of meaning in the meme through the interaction of the image and the words.
- A meme uses an image to add an additional level of humour or a second meaning that is, or adds to, the joke.



Behind the meme:

- Many memes, including the 'avocado toast' memes about owning a house also rely on social and cultural contextual knowledge.
- This joke works in the same way:
 - ◇ *'What did the avocado half say to the other avocado half? Without you, I'm empty inside.'*
- The contextual knowledge that makes the joke funny is that when you separate two halves of an avocado and remove the pit, there is a large hole or void where the pit was. If avocados had tiny seeds the joke wouldn't be funny!
- Here's another example:
 - ◇ *'What did the guy at the party say when he realized there was nothing left to dip his tortilla chip in?' – 'I've hit guac bottom.'*
- This one's only funny when you know that avocados are used to make guacamole – so the pun on 'guac' works.



Memes on the menu

- Write this short list of food items on the board:
 - ◇ Toast, pear, avocado, popcorn, orange.
- With the class, look at the list of food items and brainstorm a long list of adjectives for these foods.
- Here are some examples but come up with any adjectives within reason:
 - ◇ Toast – buttered, crunchy, singed
 - ◇ Pear – ripe, round, sweet
 - ◇ Avocado – scaly, bumpy, green, makes guacamole
 - ◇ Popcorn – fluffy, popped, light and airy
 - ◇ Orange – round, bouncy, orange coloured
- Students choose one of the food items and create their own 'Memacado' or 'Memetoast' or 'Memepop!' meme that marries an image and words to make a joke about one of the food items.
- The adjectives may provide puns or word-play jokes that work within the word/image context of a meme.
 - ◇ 'One day you're the best thing since sliced bread – the next day you're toast.'
 - ◇ 'Ap-pear-antly it's lunchtime.'
 - ◇ Image of a pear saying to another pear, 'You're so sweet.'
- Post all the class productions on a wall.
- Students browse the wall and make another meme inspired by any of their classmate's productions.
- Humour often works this way – it relies on bouncing ideas back and forth (this is why comedy script writers nearly always work in teams!)

Memeoji stories

- Now move to emojis and ask students to tell a short story or explain a favourite food recipe using only emojis, no words.



- Have them post these on the same wall anonymously.
- Students browse them – ask them to pick one that is not their own and ‘read it out loud’. The originator stays quiet until they are done – did they get it right?
- Discuss: How did the emojis create meaning, and how did readers draw on their own lived experience and context to decode the emoji story?

Translation A: I love tacos with corn.

Translation B: Chefs make cake from avocados and that is a bit alarming.

Perspective, power and humour

- If you do unpack the ‘avocado toast’ memes, the background info includes the knowledge that houses cost a lot; that avocado toast is a popular café breakfast; and that there is tension between older and younger generations about home ownership. (This is over-simplifying the complex situation but it’s a start!)
- For older students the ‘avocado toast’ meme trend provides prime examples of humour that reveals tension between identity, power and social difference.
- Try this. Find any appropriate avocado toast / housing crisis meme. Examine it together and discuss with students:
 1. What is the **message** this meme is conveying?
 2. Is that message **accurate**?

3. Who is the **audience** the meme was created for?

4. Whose **perspective** is it from?

- The idea that reckless spending is the reason young Millennials can’t afford houses, has been proven untrue many times over, including by the Wall Street Times and by other reliable news sources. So the meme is not accurate. Who is the audience and whose perspective is it from?
- Because it’s inaccurate, many of the memes create humour by exposing the ridiculousness of the idea.
- Some compare avocado toast to gold and jewels, and a famous one puts a diamond wedding ring in the middle of an avocado with the caption ‘Will you marry me?’ (And then the meme went real life which is another layer of social context... [See this article](#) about the trend.)
- The untrue nature of the joke plus the tension between generations may be the reason the avo-toast-storm has raged so long and so hard. But it has also provided Millennials with plenty of food for ridicule of what was, after all, an incorrect idea – as they assume the humble *ahuacatl* as their own generational brand mascot.

Extensions

- Ask students to compare the meaning of the avo-toast meme-storm of 2017-2020 to the 1980s avocado marketing efforts (Mr Ripe Guy), OR to the original renaming of the humble alligator pear in 1914. Can they make a meme about avocado marketing?

