

# australianplays

## EDUCATION RESOURCES FOR DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDENTS IN THE ONLINE WORLD APRIL 2020

These resources have been created for the online learning world. You may know some of the selected plays and some may be new. It's always great to make discoveries. Whichever is the case, Australian Plays recommends that teachers access and read a script before selecting it for their students.

Each script and the accompanying activities are designed as *a mini unit of work* or *series of lessons* for students to do solo, in pairs and in collaboration to take place over several days or spread across two or more weeks. It all depends on your students and the learning context.

For each selected play there are activities that include:

- Suggested ways to jump into the script - individually, in pairs, in breakout groups, as a class, 'live' in the online space OR to prepare and bring back
- Monologues, Duologues and Scenes to read, learn, present and 'perform', that can be assessed 'live' or recorded by students and then submitted for assessment
- Ways for students to consider the design elements of theatre; set, properties, costume, sound, make-up. From reading the script they can make some creative decisions – what would this play look like and sound like? (Without sneaking looks at the productions shots first!)
- Suggestions for analysing and evaluating the script by reading professional reviews of previous productions and comparing and contrasting
- Listening to interviews with playwrights about their play, why they wrote it, and the stories they want to tell
- See production trailers or highlights that offer glimpses into the world of the play
- Access Education/Teachers notes prepared especially for the show that contain a whole stack of other activities for teachers to use with students!

Links to the curriculum: at the end of this resource there are two tables that link resources and the study of the plays to the Australian Curriculum in the Arts Drama and to aspects of each of the senior curricula in Drama/Theatre. They are suggestions only but may offer educators way to consider why and how these scripts address learning areas and assessment.

If you aren't able to have a school production this term, consider how one of these plays can be your 'production' in the online space.

So, consider your students, what are they into? Which script might offer them some new learning about plays and theatre? Over to you...and them.

**Meg Upton**  
**Education Curator**  
**Australian Plays**

## EXPLORE THE AUSTRALIAN PLAYS WEBSITE:

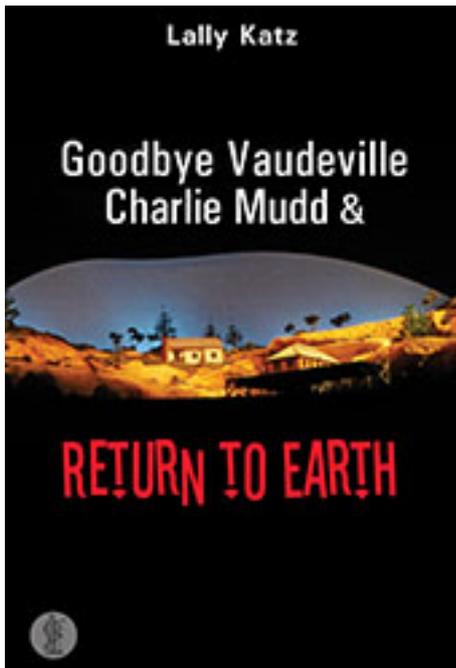
**Australian Plays YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/AustralianPlays>

Here you and your students will find an incredible series of digital offerings all from living, contemporary Australian playwrights, talking about their plays, why they write for the stage, what prompts them to write, the stories they choose to write. The channel also offers insights into major arts festivals, networks and theatre companies who champion playwriting and playwrights.

- **RED DOOR** - <https://australianplays.org/reddoor>
- **BLAKSTAGE** - <https://australianplays.org/blakstage/media-gallery>
- **OF THE ISLAND** - <https://australianplays.org/oftheisland>
- **IN CONVERSATION** - [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKMLRd6FZNkBDUtmVhrztsl5oZC\\_4wro](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKMLRd6FZNkBDUtmVhrztsl5oZC_4wro)
- **AUSTRALIAN THEATRE FORUM** - <https://australianplays.org/atf>
- **NATIONAL PLAY FESTIVAL** - <https://australianplays.org/npf/video>
- **PLAYBOX** - <https://australianplays.org/playbox>
- **SYDNEY FESTIVAL** - <https://australianplays.org/sydney-festival-2020>

On the Australian Plays website <https://australianplays.org/> you will find links to:

- **MALTHOUSE EDUCATION** - <https://australianplays.org/malthouse-education>
- **STATE THEATRE COMPANY OF SA EDUCATION RESOURCES** -  
<https://australianplays.org/statetheatresaeducation>
- **STATE OF PLAY COLLECTED ESSAYS** - <https://australianplays.org/state-of-play>
- **WOMEN IN THEATRE DATABASE** - <https://australianplays.org/wits>



## RETURN TO EARTH BY LALLY KATZ

**FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PLAYS COLLECTION (PUBLISHED WITH GOODBYE VAUDEVILLE, CHARLIE MUDD) - <https://australianplays.org/SCRIPT/CP-AN36>**

When prodigal daughter Alice returns to the sleepy seaside town of Tathra, she's so out of touch with reality and social mores that she can't even remember how to eat. But with a quest to do what's right – fall in love and have a baby – Alice has the local mechanic firmly in her sights.

Maniacally cheerful, her parents are determined to gloss over the missing years, but her brother and former best friend are not so quick to forgive. Where has Alice been? What's her real name? And why does she hold the key to their happiness? *Return to Earth* is a story about family, sacrifice and reconnecting with the world. After that, it gets a whole lot more complicated. The grief associated with the loss of Tom's wife and what is now happening to his six year old daughter Catta, mean Alice must make some clear decisions about staying or leaving again.

Edges on the whimsical but is ultimately lyrical and profound. It is a poignant play that tenderly captures the moment, often littered with casualties, when a young person moves from transparency to opacity, from childhood to adulthood - a period of intense loss and confusion.

**SUITABLE FOR STUDENTS IN YEARS 9-12 (SOME SEXUAL REFERENCES, SOME LANGUAGE, ISSUES AROUND GRIEF AND LOSS)**

### **SETTING, STRUCTURE, AND STYLE:**

Set in a beach house in Tathra, NSW in the early 2000s. A series of shorter scenes in multiple locations. The play includes naturalistic dialogue and, in true Lally Katz style, moments of magic realism.

## **CHARACTERS:**

Alice Waster, early 30s

Wendy Waster, Alice's mother, early 60s

Cleveland Waster, Alice's father, early 60s

Tom Waster, Alice's brother, early 30s

Catta Waster, Tom's daughter, 6

Jeanie, Alice's old school friend, early 30s

Theo, a mechanic and also a fisherman, early 30s

Doctor, middle aged

## **ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES:**

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR READING THE SCRIPT:**

- Read the entire play in your own time or as directed by your teacher
- Allocate the characters across the group, doubling or sharing if required to create one large or two or more smaller casts.
- Do a 'live' reading of the script in episodes across a couple of online sessions OR
- Allocate specific scenes for smaller groups/pairs to prepare and present back to the group

### **THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES OFFER SHORT SCENE EXPLORATION AND MONOLOGUES. THESE COULD BE SET FOR ASSESSMENT:**

#### **Alice, Wendy and Cleveland Scene 3, p 8-10**

Begins: (Alice) God, I really love chewing

Ends: (Wendy) So you know you're still so welcome here Alice

#### **Alice, Tom, and Catta, Scene 10, p 28-29**

Begins: (Alice) Mom?

Ends: (Catta) So he wouldn't be sad anymore on your birthday

### **MONOLOGUES:**

1. Alice, page 18-19 (2-3 minutes)  
Begins: No. No. We made them together  
Ends: I might not be good at it like you are, but I'm trying
2. Wendy, page 43 (3-4 minutes)  
Begins: But the next time you come back he'll be a different kind of character  
Ends: But that could be what this string is
3. Alice, page 62 (2-3 minutes)  
Begins: Oh Mom. I mean man...  
Ends: I could see just where I needed to go

### **'STAGING' THE PRODUCTION:**

While not being able to see a performance of the show at the moment, you can put your imagination to work.

- Can you remember how the script and the story described the locations and places?
- What things happened in the story that suggest props and costumes, lights and sets, music and sound?

- How do you imagine this play would be staged?
- Create a Pinterest page or other digital scrapbook with images of set pieces and properties – upload to a group share drive – colours, tones, palette, textures, size and dimensions
- What do you think are the resonating symbols in this script – words, colours, objects, ideas?
- How could you represent one or more of these in your design?
- Design/sketch an idea for the set for one of the scenes
- Design/sketch a costume for one of the characters – perhaps the one you are playing
- Design/record a sound scape for one of the scenes and play it to the group
- Could some of these design ideas be used in a final ‘version’ of the group’s interpretation of this script?

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- Designing the sets for *Return to Earth* <https://www.mtc.com.au/discover-more/mtc-now-2020/creating-the-sets-for-return-to-earth/>
- Visual trailer for the MTC production: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDfmK1hKhYM>
- Griffin Theatre Sydney production of *Return to Earth*: <https://griffintheatre.com.au/whats-on/return-to-earth/>

#### **REVIEWS: WHAT DO THE CRITICS SAY?**

Critical reviews are one person’s perspective of a theatre performance. They inform but they are not the ‘definitive’ analysis of a production. Consider the following two reviews. Compare and contrast them with your reading of the script.

- What further information about the play, the style, the direction, the acting and design do these reviews offer you?
  - Are they favourable? Critical?
  - Would you go and see the play based on the review?
1. Theatrenotes by Alison Croggan: <http://theatrenotes.blogspot.com/2011/11/review-return-to-earth.html>
  2. Stage Whispers: <http://www.stagewhispers.com.au/reviews/return-earth>

The following two tables offer links to the Australian Curriculum – the Arts and general capabilities – and to aspects of each of the State and Territory senior curriculum in Drama/Theatre Studies.

## CURRICULUM LINKS: THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

LEARNING AREA	DESCRIPTION / EXAMPLES OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
<b>THE ARTS - DRAMA</b>	<p>In Drama students across all bands/year levels, explore the following <b>Elements of drama including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles of narrative (story)</li> <li>• Viewpoints – multiple/different</li> <li>• Forms – structures, devised, scripted</li> <li>• Skills, techniques and processes – making and responding including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role, character and relationships, voice and movement, language, ideas and dramatic action, Audience (particularly how to ‘perform online’)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Materials – voice, body, props, costumes, lighting, sound, space</li> </ul>
<b>CAPABILITIES</b>	
<b>LITERACY</b>	<p><b>LITERACY IN THE ARTS</b></p> <p>In the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, students use literacy to develop, apply and communicate their knowledge and skills as artists and as audiences.</p> <p>Through making and responding, students enhance and extend their literacy skills as they create, compose, design, analyse, comprehend, discuss, interpret and evaluate their own and others’ artworks.</p> <p>Each Arts subject requires students to learn and use specific terminology of increasing complexity as they move through the curriculum. Students understand that the terminologies of The Arts vary according to context and they develop their ability to use language dynamically and flexibly.</p>
<b>NUMERACY</b>	<p><b>NUMERACY IN THE ARTS</b></p> <p>In the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, students select and use relevant numeracy knowledge and skills to plan, design, make, interpret, analyse and evaluate artworks.</p> <p>Across The Arts subjects, students recognise and use: number to calculate and estimate; spatial reasoning to solve problems involving space, patterns, symmetry, 2D shapes and 3D objects; scale and proportion to show and describe positions, pathways and movements; and measurement to explore length, area, volume, capacity, time, mass and angles.</p>

	<p>Students work with a range of numerical concepts to organise, analyse and create representations of data relevant to their own or others' artworks, such as diagrams, charts, tables, graphs and motion capture.</p>
<p><b>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING</b></p>	<p><b>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING</b></p> <p>Responding to the challenges of the twenty-first century – with its complex environmental, social and economic pressures – requires young people to be creative, innovative, enterprising and adaptable, with the motivation, confidence and skills to use critical and creative thinking purposefully.</p> <p>This capability combines two types of thinking: <b>critical thinking and creative thinking</b>. Though the two are not interchangeable, they are strongly linked, bringing complementary dimensions to thinking and learning.</p> <p><b>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING IN THE ARTS</b></p> <p>In the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, critical and creative thinking is integral to making and responding to artworks.</p> <p>In creating artworks, students draw on their curiosity, imagination and thinking skills to pose questions and explore ideas, spaces, materials and technologies.</p> <p>They consider possibilities and make choices that assist them to take risks and express their ideas, concepts, thoughts and feelings creatively.</p> <p>They consider and analyse the motivations, intentions and possible influencing factors and biases that may be evident in artworks they make to which they respond.</p> <p>They offer and receive effective feedback about past and present artworks and performances, and communicate and share their thinking, visualisation and innovations to a variety of audiences.</p>
<p><b>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY</b></p>	<p><b>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY</b></p> <p>Personal and social capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.</p>

	<p><b>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY IN THE ARTS</b></p> <p>In the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, students identify and assess personal strengths, interests and challenges. As art makers, performers and audience, students develop and apply personal skills and dispositions such as self-discipline, goal setting and working independently, and show initiative, confidence, resilience and adaptability.</p> <p>They also learn to empathise with the emotions, needs and situations of others, to appreciate diverse perspectives, and to understand and negotiate different types of relationships.</p> <p>When working with others, students develop and practise social skills that assist them to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, make considered group decisions and show leadership.</p> <p>The study of English as a system helps students to understand how language functions as a key component of social interactions across all social situations.</p>
<p><b>INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING</b></p>	<p><b>INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING</b></p> <p>Intercultural understanding is an essential part of living with others in the diverse world of the twenty-first century. It assists young people to become responsible local and global citizens, equipped through their education for living and working together in an interconnected world. Intercultural understanding combines personal, interpersonal and social knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Intercultural understanding stimulates students’ interest in the lives of others. It cultivates values and dispositions such as curiosity, care, empathy, reciprocity, respect and responsibility, open-mindedness and critical awareness, and supports new and positive intercultural behaviours.</p> <p>Though all are significant in learning to live together, three dispositions – <b>expressing empathy, demonstrating respect and taking responsibility</b> – have been identified as critical to the development of Intercultural Understanding in the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>Drama and the study of others’ stories greatly contributes to these dispositions</p>

STATE SENIOR SYSTEM	LINKS/CONNECTIONS – some or all of the following in an online world
HSC Drama (New South Wales)	<p><b>Australian Drama and Theatre</b></p> <p>Dramatic Traditions in Australia</p> <p>Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice</p> <p>The Voice of Women in Theatre</p> <p>Approaches to Acting</p> <p>Significant plays of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century</p>
VCE Drama & Theatre Studies (Victoria)	<p><b>Drama Unit 2 – Australian Identity</b></p> <p>Area of Study 1: Using Australia as inspiration</p> <p>Area of Study 2: Presenting a ‘devised’ performance – in an online space</p> <p>Area of Study 3: Analysing a devised performance</p> <p><b>Theatre Studies Unit 2 – Modern Theatre Styles and Conventions</b></p> <p>Area of Study 1 – exploring modern theatre styles and conventions</p> <p>Area of Study 2 – Interpreting scripts</p>
QCAA Drama & Drama in Practice (QLD)	<p><b>Drama - Units 1-4: Share, Reflect, Challenge, Transform including:</b></p> <p>Cultural inheritances of storytelling</p> <p>A range of linear and non-linear forms</p> <p>Realism, including Magical Realism</p> <p>Associated conventions of styles and texts</p> <p>Theatre of Social Comment</p> <p>Contemporary performance</p> <p>Associated conventions of styles and texts</p> <p>Inherited texts as stimulus (for making own)</p>
Tasmanian Department of Education	<p><b>Drama Foundations 2</b></p> <p>Learning about different drama texts</p> <p>About storytelling</p> <p>How to review theatre (not necessarily live!)</p> <p>Vocal and movement skills</p> <p>How to turn a script into an ‘online performance’</p> <p><b>Drama Foundations 3</b></p> <p>How to create characters from scripts</p> <p>Vocal techniques for characterisation</p> <p>How to review and evaluate theatre</p> <p>About theatrical genres</p> <p>How to interpret drama texts</p>
SACE - South Australia NTCET – Northern Territory	<p><b>Drama – Stage 1</b></p> <p>Responding to drama – analysing and evaluation – written mode</p>

	<p>Dramatic synthesis – present a dramatic produce in ‘online presentation mode’ (at present) or a written response</p> <p><b>Drama – Stage 2</b></p> <p>Students analyse texts and other materials, (online) performance, and their own learning</p> <p>Students experience diverse perspectives and challenge their imaginations</p>
WACE – Western Australia	<p><b>ATAR syllabus</b></p> <p>Outcome 1 – Drama ideas</p> <p>Outcome 2 – Drama skills and processes</p> <p>Outcome 3 – Drama responses</p> <p>Outcome 4 – Drama in society</p>
BSSS – Australian Capital Territory	<p><b>The resource and scripts included addresses a range of units including:</b></p> <p>Comedy</p> <p>Design for the Stage</p> <p>Lighting and sound design</p> <p>Realism</p> <p>Theatre for young people</p>

australian *plays*.org