

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 and 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' and 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
- 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 offer ideas about how the resources and the study of the plays link to the Australian Curriculum in the Arts, Drama and to aspects of each of the senior curriculum in Drama/Theatre. They are suggestions only but may offer educators way to consider why and how these scripts can address learning.

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



THE SEASON BY NATHAN MAYNARD

INCLUDED IN OF THE ISLAND COLLECTION - <https://australianplays.org/oftheisland/view-the-scripts>

Aboriginal playwright Nathan Maynard presents a hilarious portrait of the Duncans, a family bursting with love and always up for a laugh. They're back on Big Dog Island, a speck of land in Bass Strait, for the annual mutton-bird harvest. Hatchets are buried, secrets told, pranks pulled and birds plucked. But this year, things are different. One generation is giving way to the next, the youngsters have their own way of doing things, and government regulation is making its presence felt - even on this remote patch of earth.

The Season is a warm and laugh-out-loud comedy about an Aboriginal family who come together each year for the traditional Mutton Bird harvest on Tasmania's Dog Island. It is a time for the family to come together, to catch up, to reminisce and to look forward together. But as with any family, tension is simmering just below the surface, and can bubble over with both heartbreaking and hilarious results. The show is big-hearted, accessible, upfront and honest, providing a fascinating glimpse into a little-known tradition. More importantly, it joyously celebrates a thriving culture that continues to grow and strengthen despite several centuries of colonization.

SUITABLE FOR STUDENTS AGED 14-18 (SOME LANGUAGE, FAMILY THEMES, INDIGENOUS CHARACTERS AND STORIES)

SETTING AND STYLES:

The play is set on Big Dog Island in Bass Strait in contemporary times. It is linear in structure and features, dialogue driven with moments of song. Family drama, Naturalism with aspects of Magic Realism

CHARACTERS:

BEN DUNCAN: 60.

STELLA DUNCAN: 58. Wife of Ben.

AUNTY MARLENE: 62. Stella's sister.

LOU DUNCAN: 35. Ben and Stella's daughter.

CLAY DUNCAN: 16. Lou's son.

RITCHIE DUNCAN: 30. Ben and Stella's son.

NEIL WATSON: 60. Ben's mutton bird opposition and Marlene's lover.

SENIOR RANGER RICHARD HADGEMEN: National Parks and Wildlife officer.

(Neil and Ranger can be played by the same performer).

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES:

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING THE SCRIPT:

- Read the entire play in your own time or as directed by your teacher
- Allocate the eight characters within your online group
- Do a 'live' reading of the script in scenes/episodes across a couple of online learning sessions
- Allocate specific scenes for pairs or small groups to prepare and present back to the group
- The play explores Indigenous characters, stories and lived experiences so sensitivity is recommended in making interpretations

SOME SCENES YOU COULD FOCUS ON:

- Grandfather and Grandson Time (Rookery) – pages 34-36
- The ole snake trick – pages 47-49
- I can't fly no more -page 76

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

RED DOOR COLLECTION – INTERVIEWS:

Playwright Nathan Maynard in conversation with Annette Downs from Tasmania Performs. This is a wonderful interview that contextualises the play and Nathan's approach to it.

<https://australianplays.org/reddoor/scripts-interviews>

'STAGING' THE PRODUCTION:

While not being able to see a production of the show at this point in time, you can put your imagination to work, noting in the script how the set is designed, what the action suggests and how the stage directions inform what might be required.

- How do you imagine this play would be staged?
- Create a Pinterest page or other digital scrapbook with images of set pieces, properties, costumes – upload to a group share drive
- Sketch one aspect of the set – an indoor scene, an outdoor scene – select palette, textures, size and perspective
- Draw a costume for the character you play

Some of the images in the following links will provide you with production photos:

1. **Link to Tasmania Performs:** <https://www.tasperforms.com/the-season>
2. **Link to Education Resources:** <https://www.countryarts.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/The-Season-Education-Notes.pdf>. In these you will find a range of activities for students to engage with before reading

the script and after reading the script. The resources offer students ways to consider themes, structure, style, content and creative response.

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 reviews?
1. Sydney Morning Herald: <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/theatre/the-season-review-cast-brings-comic-brilliance-to-heartwarming-comedy-20171013-gz0m60.html>
 2. The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/jan/13/the-season-review-family-comedy-gives-wing-to-some-spirited-performances>

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
THE ARTS - DRAMA	<p>In Drama students across all bands/year levels, explore the following Elements of drama including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles of narrative (story) • Viewpoints – multiple/different • Forms – structures, devised, scripted • Skills, techniques and processes – making and responding including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role, character and relationships, voice and movement, language, ideas and dramatic action, Audience (particularly how to ‘perform online’) • Materials – voice, body, props, costumes, lighting, sound, space
CAPABILITIES	
LITERACY	<p>LITERACY IN THE ARTS</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>
NUMERACY	<p>NUMERACY IN THE ARTS</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>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING</p>	<p>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING</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: critical thinking and creative thinking. Though the two are not interchangeable, they are strongly linked, bringing complementary dimensions to thinking and learning.</p> <p>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING IN THE ARTS</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>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY</p>	<p>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY</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>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY IN THE ARTS</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>INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING</p>	<p>INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING</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 – expressing empathy, demonstrating respect and taking responsibility – 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>Australian Drama and Theatre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dramatic Traditions in Australia Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice The Voice of Women in Theatre Approaches to Acting Significant plays of the 20th Century
VCE Drama & Theatre Studies (Victoria)	<p>Drama Unit 2 – Australian Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of Study 1: Using Australia as inspiration Area of Study 2: Presenting a ‘devised’ performance – in an online space Area of Study 3: Analysing a devised performance <p>Theatre Studies Unit 2 – Modern Theatre Styles and Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of Study 1 – exploring modern theatre styles and conventions Area of Study 2 – Interpreting scripts
QCAA Drama & Drama in Practice (QLD)	<p>Drama - Units 1-4: Share, Reflect, Challenge, Transform including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural inheritances of storytelling A range of linear and non-linear forms Realism, including Magical Realism Associated conventions of styles and texts Theatre of Social Comment Contemporary performance Associated conventions of styles and texts Inherited texts as stimulus (for making own)
Tasmanian Department of Education	<p>Drama Foundations 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning about different drama texts About storytelling How to review theatre (not necessarily live!) Vocal and movement skills How to turn a script into an ‘online performance’ <p>Drama Foundations 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to create characters from scripts Vocal techniques for characterisation How to review and evaluate theatre About theatrical genres How to interpret drama texts

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

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