

## 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:

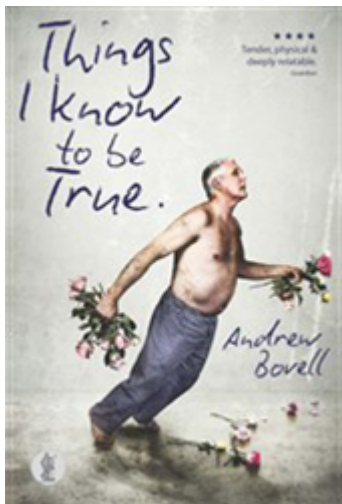
**Australian Plays YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/AustralianPlays>

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>



## THINGS I KNOW TO BE TRUE BY ANDREW BOVELL

### FROM THE STATE THEATRE COMPANY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA EDUCATION COLLECTION - <https://australianplays.org/statetheatresaeducation/scripts>

Bob and Fran Price have loved each other for thirty years. They have built a home and raised four strong children. At the end of it all, they are left asking: Was it worth it? Who are we, now that the children have gone? Embedded in this larger story are the stories of the children's lives within and beyond the family. *Things I Know to be True* is a funny and honest account of family life in the Australian suburbs. Over the course of one year, the four adult Price children struggle to establish their identities and deal with personal crises.

Andrew Bovell's writing brings the human experience to the fore, honestly and often devastatingly. Reviews of the play describe it as 'a thing of beauty', 'an intricate, inventive study of family life' and 'gently magical'. An incredible play recommended **for senior students only**.

### SUITABLE FOR STUDENTS AGED 16-18 (SOME STRONG LANGUAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY, SOME DRUG REFERENCES)

#### SETTING AND STYLE:

The play is set primarily in a suburban home and garden in Hallett Cove, in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, a provincial city in Australia, not unlike any working-class suburb in any provisional city in the Western world. The production was co-produced with Frantic Assembly (UK) and draws strongly on physical theatre to create place, time and inner monologue. Use of music and song.

#### CHARACTERS:

FRAN PRICE - 57 – mother/nurse

BOB PRICE – 63 – father, auto factory worker

ROSIE – 19 - youngest daughter, travelling/gap year

PIP – 34 - eldest daughter, education department bureaucrat

BEN – 28 - youngest son, financial services worker

MARK / MIA – eldest son (transgender), IT specialist

## ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES:

### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING THE SCRIPT:

- This play is very powerful, so teacher preview is highly recommended
- Read the entire play in your own time or as directed by your teacher
- Allocate characters across the group, doubling or sharing if required
- You could create alternating casts if you have a large group
- Do a 'live' reading of the script in episodes across a couple of online sessions OR
- Allocate specific scenes for smaller groups/pairs to take away, prepare and present back to the group, bringing them all together as a full script reading

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES OFFER MONOLOGUES EXPLORATIONS. THESE COULD BE SET FOR ASSESSMENT:

#### MONOLOGUES:

1. Rosie, pages 3-5 (5-7 minutes)  
Begins: Berlin. A winter coat. A travel bag  
Ends: And I know that I have to go home
2. Pip, pages 17-18 (3-4 minutes)  
Begins: This garden is the world  
Ends: This garden was the world
3. Ben, page 46 (2-3 minutes)  
Begins: In the chaos of our home  
Ends: ...in the secrets that only they shared
4. Bob, page 63 (1-1.5 minutes)  
Begins: It wasn't meant to be like this...  
Ends: That's all I ever wanted it to be, Fran

#### 'STAGING' THE PRODUCTION:

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

- Recall 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 – think colours, textures, palette, dimensions, perspectives, time, era
- Are there particular symbols that resonate in this script – a word, an action, a colour, a sound, a gesture? How could you represent these in your design?
- Design/sketch a key aspect of the set ie a particular scene
- 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:

The following links provide a deeper dive into the play as it was performed at the State Theatre Company of South Australia and also in the UK. They include images, interviews and close analysis or process.

- State Theatre Company of South Australia <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpGGbtZZ46M>
- Digital Theatre <https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/education/collections/digital-theatre/things-i-know-to-be-true>
- Frantic Assembly resource pack: <https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/things-i-know-to-be-true-resource-pack>

## 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. Australian Book Review: <https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/arts-update/101-arts-update/3349-things-i-know-to-be-true-state-theatre-company-of-south-australia-and-frantic-assembly>
  2. The Adelaide Review: <https://www.adelaidereview.com.au/arts/performing-arts/2016/05/09/things-know-true/>
  3. State of the Art review: <https://www.adelaidereview.com.au/arts/performing-arts/2016/05/09/things-know-true/>

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 Elements of drama including:</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:</li> <li>Role, character and relationships, voice and movement, language, ideas and dramatic action, Audience (particularly how to ‘perform online’)</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>

	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.
<b>CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING</b>	<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</b> and <b>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>
<b>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY</b>	<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>
<b>INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING</b>	<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)	<b>Australian Drama and Theatre</b> Dramatic Traditions in Australia Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice The Voice of Women in Theatre Approaches to Acting Significant plays of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century
VCE Drama & Theatre Studies (Victoria)	<b>Drama Unit 2 – Australian Identity</b> 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 <b>Theatre Studies Unit 2 – Modern Theatre Styles and Conventions</b> Area of Study 1 – exploring modern theatre styles and conventions Area of Study 2 – Interpreting scripts
QCAA Drama & Drama in Practice (QLD)	<b>Drama - Units 1-4: Share, Reflect, Challenge, Transform including:</b> 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	<b>Drama Foundations 2</b> 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’ <b>Drama Foundations 3</b> How to create characters from scripts Vocal techniques for characterisation How to review and evaluate theatre About theatrical genres How to interpret drama texts
SACE - South Australia NTCET – Northern Territory	<b>Drama – Stage 1</b> Responding to drama – analysing and evaluation – written mode

	<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>

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