Child’s play

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| Year 9 | The Arts — Drama |
| Students create, perform and evaluate a Theatre for Young People drama work for a target audience. | |
| **Time allocation** | 20–30 hours |
| **Student roles** | Students work collaboratively as a group to research, develop script, present and evaluate a performance. They are assessed on their *individual* contributions to all areas. |
| Context for assessment  The process of creating a new work in a collaborative team is one that is relevant to many fields of work and industry. Students will be part of a Theatre for Young People (TYP) company that creates work for children and young people to be performed in schools. This assessment provides students with the opportunity to devise a performance work for a target audience and includes all the stages of development from research through forming and devising, into refining, rehearsing and presenting and finally evaluation. | |

******This assessment gathers evidence of learning for the following **Essential Learnings**:

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| The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9 | |
| Ways of working Students are able to:   * make decisions about arts elements, languages and cultural protocols in relation to specific style, function, audience and purpose of arts works * create and shape arts works by manipulating arts elements to express meaning in different contexts * modify and refine genre-specific arts works, using interpretive and technical skills * present arts works to particular audiences for a specific purpose, style and function, using genre-specific arts techniques, skills, processes and cultural protocols * identify risks and devise and apply safe practices * reflect on learning, apply new understandings and justify future applications. | Knowledge and understanding ***Drama***  **Drama involves manipulating dramatic elements and conventions to express ideas, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, through dramatic action based on real or imagined events.**   * Roles, characters and relationships are interpreted to define motivation and purpose, using specific vocal and physical techniques. * Drama elements are manipulated to create tension and status, and are used to express ideas. * Dramatic action and texts are created and interpreted through specific styles, including realism and non-realism. |
| Assessable elements  * Knowledge and understanding * Creating * Presenting * Reflecting | |
| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, *The* *Arts* Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9, QSA, Brisbane. | |

## Links to other KLAs

This assessment could be expanded to assess the following **Essential Learnings**:

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| The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9 | |
| Ways of working Students are able to:   * make decisions about arts elements, languages and cultural protocols in relation to specific style, function, audience and purpose of arts works * create and shape arts works by manipulating arts elements to express meaning in different contexts * modify and refine genre-specific arts works, using interpretive and technical skills * present arts works to particular audiences for a specific purpose, style and function, using genre-specific arts techniques, skills, processes and cultural protocols * identify risks and devise and apply safe practices * reflect on learning, apply new understandings and justify future applications. | Knowledge and understanding ***Dance***  **Dance involves using the human body to express ideas, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, by manipulating dance elements in genre-specific dance sequences.**   * Genre-specific movements are used to create actions for dance sequences. * Traditional and non-traditional performance areas are used to manipulate movement in space. * Irregular and mixed metres are used to manipulate timing. * Combinations of movement qualities are used to manipulate energy. * Structuring devices, including embellishment, abstraction and variation forms, are used to organise movement.   ***Media***  **Media involves constructing meaning, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, by manipulating media languages and technologies to shape representations.**   * Still and moving images, sounds and words are used to construct and reconstruct meaning in media texts. * Media techniques and practices are used to market, promote, deliver and exhibit media texts. * Representations of different beliefs and ideas in media texts are influenced by regulations and by contexts of audiences, producers and institutions. |
| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, *The Arts* Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9, QSA, Brisbane. | |

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| English Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9 | |
| Ways of working Students are able to:   * demonstrate and analyse the relationship between audience, subject matter, purpose and text type * construct literary texts by planning and developing subject matter, and manipulating language elements to present particular points of view. | Knowledge and understanding ***Writing and designing***  **Writing and designing involve using language elements to construct literary and non-literary texts for audiences across local, national and global contexts.**   * Writers and designers establish and maintain roles and relationships by recognising the beliefs and cultural background of their audience, and by making specific language choices. * Words and phrases, symbols, images and audio affect meaning and establish and maintain roles and relationships to influence an audience.   ***Language elements***  **Interpreting and constructing texts involve manipulating grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, audio and visual elements, in print-based, electronic and face-to-face modes (speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing and designing) across local, national and global contexts.**   * Figurative language, including onomatopoeia and alliteration, and emotive, evocative, formal and informal language, creates tone, mood and atmosphere.   ***Literary and non-literary texts***   * Manipulating literary and non-literary texts involves analysing the purpose, audience, subject matter and text structure. * Literary texts entertain, evoke emotion, create suspense, parody and develop themes. |
| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, *English* Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9, QSA, Brisbane. | |

Listed here are suggested **learning experiences** for students before attempting this assessment.

* Use internet and library-based research on the target audience and context to identify:
* characteristics, concerns and interests of young people at different ages (e.g. how they learn best, their attention span, the kinds of activities they enjoy)
* specific kinds of entertainment and their features that might appeal.
* Conduct field research into the target audience by:
* meeting and engaging in a workshop with young people of the target age range
* interviewing young people of the target age range
* watching and engaging in the forms of entertainment that young people of the target age range enjoy
* talking to adults who work with young people of the target age range.
* Engage in class discussion and sharing of research findings to consider features needed for development of drama works for the chosen audience.
* Brainstorm the kinds of entertainment that students enjoyed when they were in primary school and discuss possibilities for performance.
* Explore narrative structures in children’s stories and movies by watching children’s programs and identifying key elements.
* Attend or watch children’s theatre performances, such as the Out of the Box festival run by the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), <www.outoftheboxfestival.com.au>.
* Engage in improvisational activities to help determine group focus.
* Engage in workshops to explore the use of different dramatic conventions, character types, scenarios and stylistic characteristics of theatre.
* Identify the use of different narrative structures and elements and experiment with applying it to student’s own work.
* Read examples of published scripts and scripting conventions including character descriptions, scene titles, layout of dialogue, and use of font changes for directions.
* Devise individual scripts within a group context, using accepted script conventions and format.
* Workshop scripts, providing feedback to each other to redraft work.
* Work in groups to put together, rehearse and refine group performances.
* Experiment with performance elements to increase audience engagement.
* Organise rehearsal schedules and action plans.
* Experiment with voice and movement to develop engaging characters.
* Experiment with music, sound, costumes, puppetry and props to enhance the appeal of production for the target audience.
* Reinforce safety guidelines when using drama spaces and working with others.
* Present polished performances focusing on interpretive and technical drama skills.
* Reflect on the use of drama elements and learnings from drama experiences.

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| Icon_Resource | Teacher resources |

**Websites:**

* Australian Theatre for Young People (aytp): <www.atyp.com.au>.

atyp is a Sydney-based theatre company exclusively devoted to young people.

* Monkey Baa — Theatre for Young People: <www.monkeybaa.com.au>.

Monkey Baa, a dynamic and professional theatre company based in Sydney, has a national reputation for producing quality theatre for young people.

* The Arts Education Partnership (AEP): <www.aep-arts.org/publications>.

The AEP is committed to increasing resources for quality education in and through the arts in schools, school districts, and partnering arts and cultural institutions.

Read their report, *A Report of the Task Force on Children’s Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight,* <www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/Young%20Children.pdf>.

* Out of the Box festival: <www.outoftheboxfestival.com.au>.

This is a cultural festival for 3- to 8-year-olds run annually by the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC).

**Texts:**

* Rose, H 2000, *Plays for children*, Faber and Faber, UK.

This text includes four plays commissioned and performed by professional children's theatre groups, offering a wide variety of style and content for reading or for performance.

* Wood, D 1999, *Theatre for Children: A Guide to Writing, Adapting, Directing, and Acting*, Faber and Faber, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago.

David Wood, UK's national children's dramatist, shares his techniques for directing children's theatre and helping actors play this special (and demanding) audience.

* Clifford, S, Davison, A & Herrmann, A 1998, *Making a Leap: Theatre of Empowerment, a Practical Handbook for Drama & Theatre Work with Young People*, London, Jessica Kingsley.

This book offers the reader a comprehensive way of devising issue-based theatre with young people. The model is based on a ten-week full-time Leap project.

* Bennett, S 2006, *Theatre* for *Children and Young People: 50 Years of Professional Theatre in the UK*, ASSITEJ, UK

This publication focuses on how theatre for children and young people has developed artistic and cultural diversity in a continually changing social/political context. Through articles and casebooks, it details the development of Theatre for Children and Young People in the UK.

## redesign headings_developPreparing

Consider these points before implementing the assessment.

* Decide on the target audience for the performance. A good choice would be a local primary school (Years 1 to 3), or a single class or year from a local primary school. Ideally, your students will need access to the group while researching their target audience, and again when it is time for performances.
* Arrange internet and library access — for research, and access to texts that could be used as the basis for the script.
* Consider briefing parents/caregivers about the assessment and the value of it. It may be helpful to send a letter home so that they are aware of the commitment required.
* Organise visits to the target audience so that students can research their audience.
* Plan for rehearsal and performance times early in the term so that students are well prepared. School arrangements regarding excursions, rehearsal out of school time, off campus visits to target audience will need to be organised early in the term.
* Arrange performance space, technology and resources. This can be kept simple, or can involve professional lighting, sound, multimedia, etc.
* Look at the resources provided in the appendixes, and decide which ones you will use with your students. You may like to present the materials as posters in the classroom.

## Sample implementation plan

This table shows one way that this assessment can be implemented. It is a guide only — you may choose to use all, part, or none of the table. You may customise the table to suit your students and their school environment.

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| **Suggested time** | **Student activity** | **Teacher role** |
| **Setting the scene** | | |
| 4–6 hours | Students work in groups to research their target audience and find out about their interests.  Students prepare a short oral presentation outlining key findings about their target audience, and considerations for script and performance. | Provide access to research resources.  Set up presentations and organise order of groups. Provide guidance and feedback. |
| **Section 1. Creating your drama** | | |
| 6–8 hours | Students work in groups to develop a script for their target audience.  Each student writes one scene or section of the script that contributes to the group performance. | Assign groups, considering equity.  Provide feedback on script ideas using the workshop questions on page 8 of S*tudent booklet*.  Monitor each student’s contribution to the group writing process. |
| **Section 2. Performing your drama** | | |
| 8–10 hours | Students rehearse and present their performance. | Encourage students to make changes to their original scripts as they rehearse and refine their work to create the final performance.  Provide feedback during the rehearsal process using the Actor’s checklist on page 12 of S*tudent booklet*. |
| **Section 3. Evaluating your drama** | | |
| 1 hour | Students reflect on the process of creating and presenting their performance by completing Section 3 in the *Student booklet*. | Engage students in a group discussion, reflecting on creating and presenting processes to identify the skills and qualities people used and the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated.  Promote sensitivity to others feelings to find tactful but honest ways to evaluate each other. |

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| Icon_Resource | Resources for the assessment |

Appendix A Narrative structure

Appendix B Dramatic conventions

Appendix C Characters

Appendix D Scriptwriting checklist

Appendix E Drama glossary

Appendix F Scripting conventions

During the learning process, you and your students should have developed a shared understanding of the curriculum expectations identified as part of the planning process.

After students have completed the assessment, identify, gather and interpret the information provided in student responses. Use only the evidence in student responses to make your judgment about the quality of the student learning. Refer to the following documents to assist you in making standards-referenced judgments:

* *Guide to making judgments*
* *Indicative A response*
* *Sample responses* (where available).

### Making judgments about this assessment

As students work collaboratively in groups, teachers need to carefully monitor individual contributions within the group.

To assist making judgments on presenting, teachers are encouraged to video performances to gather evidence and provide students with feedback.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using a Guide to making judgments*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

Evaluate the information gathered from the assessment to inform teaching and learning strategies.

Involve students in the feedback process. Give students opportunities to ask follow-up questions and share their learning observations or experiences.

Focus feedback on the student’s personal progress. Emphasise continuous progress relative to their previous achievement and to the learning expectations — avoid comparing a student with their classmates.

### Giving feedback about this assessment

Provide feedback on the processes of creating, presenting and responding to drama. This may be given individually to particular students, to the small groups or to the whole class group as particular needs are identified.

When students are providing feedback for each other, it is important to encourage sensitivity to others and the use of appropriate drama languages.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using feedback*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

***Appendix A***

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| Narrative structure Most stories, films and plays follow a narrative structure. Narrative works are generally fictional stories (though they may be based on real life) that have a beginning, a middle and an end.  The purpose of narratives is generally to entertain the reader/audience and involve them in an imaginative experience. Some narratives seek to explain something or to teach a lesson. Narrative features in drama  * Main characters play a major role and the plot develops around them. * A story is told that revolves around a series of linked actions and events. * Narratives build towards some kind of conclusion. * Narratives contain dialogue between characters, and can also include direct addresses to the audience, and techniques that allow the audience to understand a character’s thoughts and feelings. * Narrative development can be shown through actions — it doesn’t always have to be told or explained. * Dramatic narratives often involve characters encountering some kind of problem that they have to overcome. |

***Appendix B***

## Dramatic conventions

To create ongoing hooks and contrast in your script it is a good idea to consider the use of different dramatic conventions. Below is a list of some possibilities to get you thinking. Talk to your teacher about any you are not sure of. Engage in improvisation and workshop activities to try using different conventions to explore the one idea.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Ritual * Freeze frames * Role plays (duologues/dialogues) * Movement sequence * Advertisement (and satirical advertisements) * Gossip mill * Monologues * Statements * Journal entries * Video diary * Time lapse * Touch and talk (or freeze and talk) * Hot seat/interrogation/interviews * Expert opinion * TV show parody * On-line chat * Split screen | * Dream sequence * Letters * Signs * Masks * Sound effects * Fast or slow motion/rewind * Mirror image * News reports * Documentary style * Courtroom report * Phone conversations * Narration * Voices in the head * Subtitles * Conscience alley * Effigy * Artefacts |

***Appendix C***

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| Characters Most plays have a small number of main characters around whom the action revolves. When scriptwriting, make sure that there enough roles for everyone and that they each have a bit of meat to them. You can use interesting chorus work as well, and have some people double up on small roles.  It is worth being aware of the following terminology when it comes to creating characters:   * **Protagonist** — the main character, who must face and overcome the central problem or conflict. They may also be the hero. These characters are generally well defined and interesting. This doesn’t mean they are perfect — in fact, their weaknesses are often what leads them into trouble. * **Antagonist** — the character who is the enemy or obstacle for the protagonist and against whom the protagonist has to work to achieve their goal. * **Archetype** — a character that represents typical human types or roles (e.g. hero, villain, wise old mentor, trickster, guardian, helper, buffoon). * **Stereotype** — a character that depicts a type of person as having a limited array of characteristics (e.g. dumb blonde, ocker Aussie, male chauvinist pig, doddery old lady).  Be careful when using stereotypes — they are often more interesting if they have a twist to them!   Think of a movie you have seen lately. Draw a character web for that movie and identify what kinds of characters are used in it.  **Example of a character web may be found at:** <www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/organizers/character\_web.pdf> |

***Appendix D***

## Scriptwriting checklist

### Preparation

* Have you conducted research and found a focus for your script?
* Have you worked out what you want to do with the script, what you want to say or explore?
* Has your story got interesting twists, conflicts, dilemmas or decisions?
* Who is the main character of the story, and why are they interesting?
* Do you need to do any extra research?
* Have you thought about the style and performance elements you wish to use? (e.g. fractured fairytale, realistic, poetic, storytelling, music, singing, dance, multimedia, etc.)

### Characters

* Who are your main characters? There should only be a couple, form a picture in your mind of each one. You can use other group members as a chorus at times.
* What are their characteristics? (e.g. passive, active, arrogant, emotional, retiring, nervous, opinionated, selfish).
* Who are the other characters and in what ways are they essential?

### Structure

How will the story unfold? Consider using basic narrative structure:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Exposition and set up * Trigger or hook * Conflict/problem | * Mini resolution * Complication | * Climax * Resolution |

*Break with narrative structure if the story demands it.*

**What kinds of narrative techniques/dramatic conventions will you use?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| * 1st person narration * 3rd person narration * Dramatic enactment | * Direct address * Stream of consciousness | * Diary, journal, blog entries * Television genres (such as game shows, advertisements, news stories, etc.) |

### Other elements to consider

* What kinds of music, singing, props/objects can be used and add meaning to your script?
* Can movement, physical theatre elements be incorporated?
* What other interesting devices could you add (e.g. character speaking in rhyme, using a well known add/song and changing the words to make it relevant and funny, some words/lines being repeated in chorus form)
* How and where could any multimedia components help add meaning to your script? (e.g. sound — live or recorded, imagery — still or moving, literal or metaphorical).
* What strong visual elements can you incorporate? (e.g. strong key props, signs, colours of costumes, etc.)
* How can you build in audience involvement and participation? (ensure you don’t just embarrass audience members, or encourage lots of yelling out)

***Appendix E***

## Drama glossary

**Elements**

The elements of drama are: role, relationships, narrative, time, space and place, language, focus, symbol, mood, contrast and tension. These are used to shape and express meaning through dramatic action.

**Role or character:** Taking on a role means you are simply representing a point of view as someone other than yourself.

**Relationships:** Includes the associations or relationships between people, the relationships between people and ideas, and the relationships between people and their environment.

**Narrative:** The sequence of events that tell a story.

**Time frames:** Signifies both the time (in a historical sense) in which the drama is set, and the way in which time (slow motion, time jump, overlap) is used to explore and share drama. Time can be structured and presented as continuous or discontinuous.

**Space:** Describes how the physical location of the performance space is used to represent the setting of the drama.

**Place:** The location or setting of the range of events that are explored.

**Language:** Vocabulary and syntax used to help distinguish a role. Drama focuses on how language is used to designate role and considers aspects such as choice of vocabulary, grammatical structures and use of slang.

**Mood:** The feeling or atmosphere that is conveyed during dramatic action.

**Tension:** This element drives dramatic action. There are four main forms of tension: the tension of the task, the tension of relationships, the tension of surprise and the tension of mystery.

* **Tension of the task:** The tension produced when the characters have particular goals to achieve. This tension is heightened when the task is interesting, hard or urgent.
* **Tension of relationships:** The tension produced by the interplay of the relationships between the roles in the drama. This tension is not necessarily antagonistic but can arise from a conflict of interest or a dilemma.
* **Tension of surprise:** The tension produced when a new idea or constraint is added to the drama.
* **Tension of mystery:** The tension produced when neither the participants within the drama nor the spectators are aware of meaning behind what is happening.

**Status:** The relative rank or social position of an individual or a group, usually described in comparative terms such as high, equal or low.

**Conventions:** Each form or style of theatre uses particular techniques and strategies to shape dramatic action to distinguish that form or style from others. For example:

* *conventions of role* include accepting role, creating role, role-reversal, status in role
* *conventions of dramatic action* include finishing the given story, sequencing dramatic action, stream of consciousness
* *conventions of improvisation* include making and accepting offers, and being “in the moment”
* *conventions of forum theatre* include the use of the joker/facilitator, audience participation, and subject matter that explores different types of oppression.

**Hook:** The beginning material in a drama, which engages an audience because of a quest, problem, issue, or surprise which draws them into wondering what will be the consequences of the dramatic action.

**Theatre for young people (TYP):** A style of theatre that has grown in prominence during the final two decades of the twentieth century. TYP texts and performances are created specifically for young people and draw on their interests and concerns.

Adapted from: Queensland School Curriculum Council (2002) CD-Rom: The Arts Years 1 to 10 Curriculum materials - Glossary***Appendix F***

## Scripting conventions

**Title** gives some idea of location and what might happen.

**Stage directions** give important information about the place and space where the action occurs.

**TITLE**

*Stage directions (in italics).*

Advice on **how** to say a line.

**Character** name goes here.

A: Dialogue

B: (Happily) Dialogue.

A: Dialogue.

B: Dialogue.

Advice on **where** to say line.

*Enter C.*

Someone new has entered the scene.

C: Dialogue.

B: (Moving to the window)  
 Dialogue.

**Dialogue** is the actual words spoken by the characters.

Record your scripts using this layout.

**Hint:** If using a computer, set the layout as a table without borders.

Adapted from module *In my own words*: <www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/kla\_arts\_sbm\_dr\_602.pdf>.