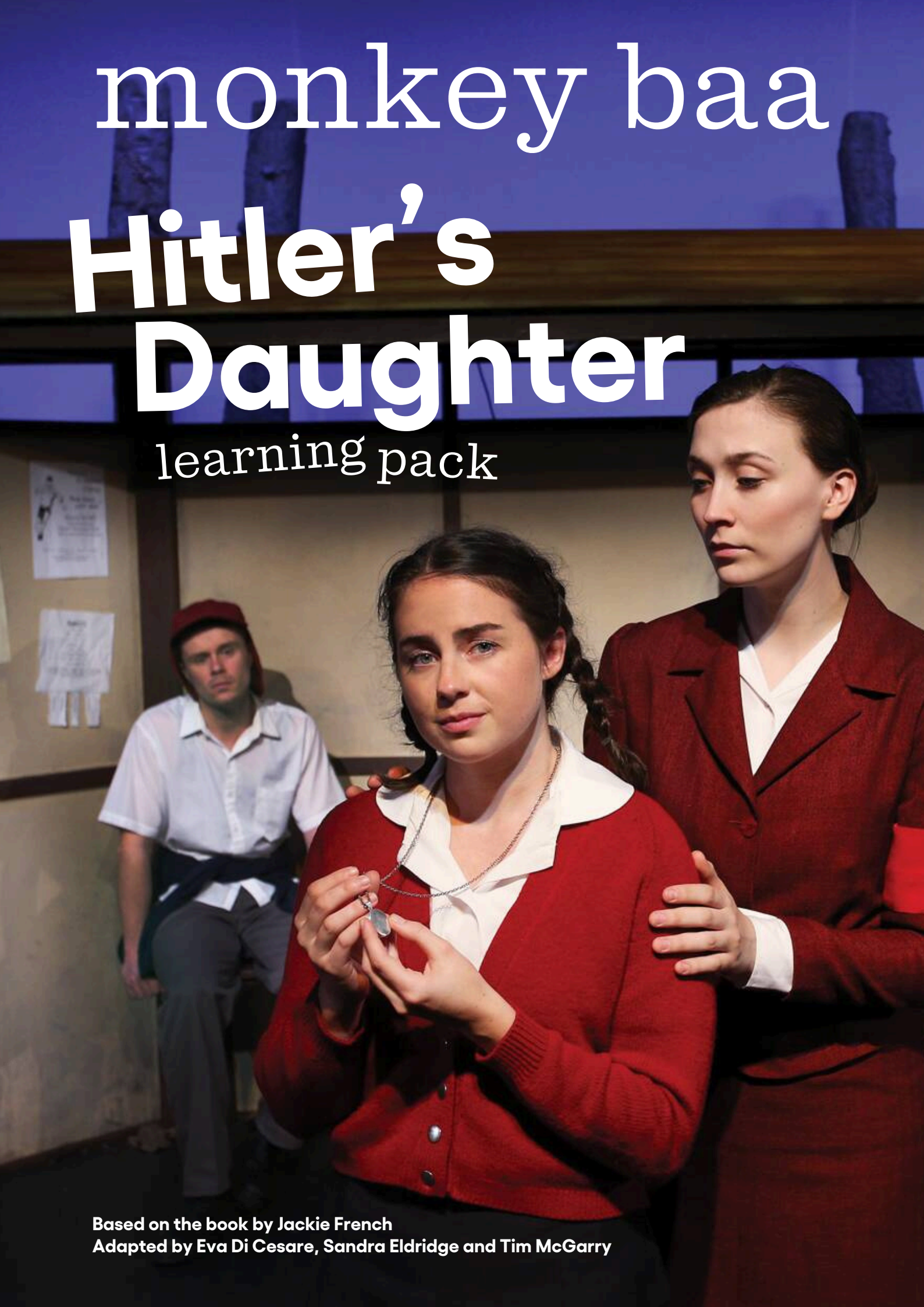




monkey baa

Hitler's Daughter

learning pack

Based on the book by Jackie French
Adapted by Eva Di Cesare, Sandra Eldridge and Tim McGarry

Monkey Baa respectfully acknowledges the custodians of this nation and honours their enduring cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, waters and seas. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, on whose lands we work, live and share stories.

As Monkey Baa tours across many nations, our offices are in Sydney and Brisbane. We respectfully acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the Turrbal and Jagera people in Brisbane and its surrounds.

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Hello!

We are thrilled to share this resource with you, designed to support your exploration of the powerful and thought-provoking production of *Hitler's Daughter*. Based on Jackie French's award-winning book and brought to life on stage by Eva Di Cesare, Sandra Eldridge and Tim McGarry, this play invites students to delve into a captivating narrative that bridges the past and present. Through the lens of storytelling, it examines questions of identity, morality and history, sparking meaningful discussions and deep personal reflection.

This learning pack has been carefully crafted to align with the Australian Curriculum and is ideal for students in Years 5–8. With engaging History and Drama activities, detailed insights into the play's adaptation process, and curriculum-aligned tasks that foster literacy, ethical understanding and intercultural awareness, this pack will enrich your classroom teaching while bringing the story to life for your students.

We hope you and your students find inspiration, challenge, and connection through the activities and insights provided here.



Did Hitler have a daughter?

On a rainy morning in the Australian countryside, four children wait for the school bus and take turns telling stories to pass the time. Anna begins a tale about Heidi, a young girl whose father was one of the most notorious figures of the 20th century—Adolf Hitler.

As the play moves between Nazi Germany in the 1940s and the present-day Australian bus stop, the characters are drawn into a gripping exploration of morality, personal responsibility and humanity. Mark, captivated by Anna's story, begins to question the nature of truth, the weight of prejudice and what it means to be complicit in a world shaped by fear and hate.

Adapted from Jackie French's award-winning novel, *Hitler's Daughter* is a suspenseful and thought-provoking work with a deeply human heart. It challenges audiences to confront history, question truth and reflect on their own values in a world where the past echoes powerfully in the present.

Director	Sandie Eldridge
Lighting Designer	Luiz Pampolha
Set and Costume Designer	Imogen Ross
Sound Designer	Jed Silver

Themes of the show

Identity and self-reflection

The play delves into questions of identity, particularly through the character of Mark, who begins to question his own identity and place in the world as he listens to Anna's story about Heidi. The exploration of Heidi's identity as the daughter of Hitler and Mark's contemplation of his own identity create a backdrop for self-reflection and personal growth.

Historical responsibility and guilt

The play raises thought-provoking questions about historical responsibility and guilt. Through Heidi's character, it examines whether she could have played a role in preventing the atrocities committed by her father. This theme prompts the audience to consider the ethical implications of being connected to a dark historical figure and the notion of collective guilt.

Morality and choices

Hitler's Daughter explores the moral dilemmas faced by its characters, particularly Heidi, who may have been in a position to influence her father's actions. The play invites audiences to contemplate the difficult choices people make in the face of extreme circumstances and how those choices can shape the course of history.

Society's fears and prejudices

The play tackles societal fears and prejudices by juxtaposing the historical context of Nazi Germany with contemporary Australia. It challenges the audience to examine how prejudices and biases persist across different times and cultures and how these attitudes impact individuals and society at large.

Narrative and perspective

The storytelling aspect of the play is crucial, as Anna recounts the imagined tale of Heidi to her friends. The play raises questions about the power of storytelling, the reliability of historical narratives, and the influence of perspective on how events are understood and interpreted.

The rise of Nazi Germany in the early 20th century marked one of the darkest periods in human history, leaving an enduring impact on global politics, culture and human rights. Central to understanding this era is recognising how Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party exploited Germany's post-World War I instability to gain power, leading to widespread atrocities under a totalitarian regime.

Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in January 1933. By August 1934, after the death of President Paul von Hindenburg, Hitler consolidated absolute power, declaring himself Führer. His totalitarian state controlled nearly every aspect of German life. Hitler's rise to power was heavily influenced by the national trauma and economic devastation following Germany's defeat in World War I, coupled with widespread discontent over the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles. He offered promises of national rejuvenation and economic recovery, which resonated deeply with a population yearning for stability and pride.

At the core of Hitler's vision was the establishment of a so-called "Aryan" empire, where the Nazi Party sought to create a racially "pure" state. Nazi ideology scapegoated minority groups for Germany's economic and social woes, branding them as threats to the nation. The Jewish community, people with disabilities, Roma and Sinti, homosexuals, political opponents (such as communists), and other marginalised groups were subjected to dehumanising propaganda, systemic persecution, and ultimately, genocide. These groups were often referred to by the Nazis as *untermenschen*, or "subhuman," underscoring the inhumanity at the heart of their regime.

The Nazis' violent campaign to achieve their racial and territorial ambitions led to World War II. In 1939, Germany invaded Poland, igniting a conflict that would span continents and claim the lives of over 60 million people. This included the Holocaust, the genocide of over 6 million Jewish men, women, and children, alongside hundreds of thousands of other victims.



Historical context

Systemic violence during this period included forced labour in ghettos, mass deportations, and imprisonment in concentration and extermination camps. These methods inflicted inhumane suffering on millions, with the Nazis using industrial-scale killing as part of their “Final Solution” to the so-called Jewish Question. The Holocaust remains a chilling reminder of the consequences of unchecked prejudice and totalitarianism.

Hitler's regime ended in 1945 with Germany's surrender to the Allied Forces. On April 30, 1945, Adolf Hitler committed suicide as Soviet forces closed in on Berlin. The fall of the Nazi regime marked the end of World War II in Europe, but the devastation wrought by the war and the Holocaust left an indelible mark on history.



Connecting the historical context to Hitler's Daughter

Hitler's Daughter provides a deeply personal lens through which audiences can explore the vast and often incomprehensible events of Nazi Germany. The play's central conceit invites students and audiences to grapple with questions of morality, complicity and the human impact of history.

The story unfolds as a group of modern-day children hear Heidi's tale, prompting discussions about guilt, responsibility, and the role of ordinary people in extraordinary events. This narrative framework allows young audiences to consider how individuals, families and communities were drawn into or affected by the Nazi regime, and to reflect on how similar dynamics might play out in contemporary society.

Ordinary people and complicity

In Hitler's Daughter, one of the core themes is the complicity of ordinary individuals in systemic injustice. This mirrors historical realities in Nazi Germany, where many citizens actively supported, passively accepted, or failed to resist the atrocities committed by the regime.

Through Heidi's story, Hitler's Daughter raises questions about whether ignorance, indifference or silence is itself a form of complicity. It challenges audiences to reflect on the moral responsibilities of individuals who live under oppressive systems, drawing parallels to contemporary examples of injustice and discrimination.

Propaganda and the manipulation of youth

The play also highlights the impact of indoctrination, particularly on young people. Hitler placed immense importance on shaping the beliefs of the next generation, using the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls to instil loyalty to the Nazi Party and its ideologies. Children were taught to idolise Hitler as a "father figure" and to view groups like Jews, Roma and people with disabilities as threats to society.

In Hitler's Daughter, the character of Heidi provides a counterpoint to this narrative of indoctrination. Her fictional existence allows audiences to imagine what it might have been like to grow up in the shadow of one of history's most infamous figures, wrestling with the morality of her father's actions and her own complicity.

Parallels to contemporary issues

Hitler's Daughter resonates with modern audiences because it prompts them to think about the legacy of discrimination and the responsibilities of individuals in the face of injustice.

By centring its narrative on Heidi, Hitler's Daughter asks students to consider what it means to be "innocent" in the face of systemic violence. Can someone be held accountable for the actions of their family, their country or their leaders? Heidi's story serves as a vehicle for exploring these questions, allowing young audiences to engage with history in a way that feels immediate and personal.

By engaging with Hitler's Daughter, students are invited to critically examine the choices and actions of individuals during the rise of Nazi Germany and to reflect on their own roles in shaping a just and inclusive society. For further information, resources, and educational materials, educators and students are encouraged to visit the Sydney Jewish Museum's Resource Centre, which offers extensive insights into the Holocaust.







**Behind
the scenes**

Creating the show

**Theatre begins with an idea,
a spark of imagination.**

When the Monkey Baa team first read Hitler's Daughter, they were struck by its powerful themes. Mark's journey and Heidi's story resonated deeply, especially the big questions raised by the characters. Mark wonders, Do kids have to be like their parents? Anna asks, Is something right or wrong just because your parents say so? These questions sparked discussions about morality, responsibility and the courage to make your own choices.

At its core, Hitler's Daughter asks: How do we know we're doing the right thing? It challenges audiences to think about racism, prejudice, and the dangers of letting fear allow unthinkable events to happen. In today's world—where fake news, manipulated facts and extreme ideologies often dominate—it's more important than ever to think critically about truth, kindness and empathy.

This play invites young audiences to reflect on the past to better understand the present, encouraging them to stand for compassion, humanity and the courage to question what they see and hear. By embracing these values, we can shape a future that is kinder and more understanding—not just as individuals, but as a global human community.

Through its unique mix of fact and fiction, Hitler's Daughter shows how stories can help us make sense of the world, asking us to confront the challenges of truth and responsibility in the world we live in today.

Let's chat with Jackie French



What was your inspiration for writing *Hitler's Daughter*?

A story my mother's friend told me about a 14-year-old boy in Hitler's Germany stayed with me. He grew up surrounded by Nazi ideology and became a concentration camp guard because that was his reality. Years later, while watching *Cabaret* with my son, he was mesmerised by the song *Tomorrow Belongs to Me*, only to realise it was a Nazi anthem. It struck him—and me—how easily someone could be drawn into such beliefs at that age.

How did this experience shape the themes in your play?

It left me with a series of profound questions that became the foundation of *Hitler's Daughter*. How does a 14-year-old distinguish between good and evil when the world around them is falling apart? If a young person recognises evil, how can they stand against it when no one seems to listen—or can they? And the question that really haunted me: If you were Hitler's child, would you be expected to carry the burden of apologising for atrocities you had no part in? These questions challenge us to confront the weight of responsibility, and they are the central themes that run through the play.

What do you hope audiences take away from *Hitler's Daughter*?

I hope the play encourages audiences to think deeply about the choices they face and the values they hold. History shows us how easily people, especially the young, can be manipulated by the world around them. It's a reminder to question, to think critically, and to recognise that even in the darkest times, individuals can make choices that matter. I want the audience to reflect on how we inherit responsibility, how we respond to it, and what we can do to ensure that the past doesn't repeat itself.



Set and costume design

by Imogen Ross

As the show takes shape in the rehearsal room, the designer begins to create the world of the play.

The staging of Hitler's Daughter was simple but versatile, using minimal props to transform the set into different locations. A single bus stop bench became Mark's mother's car, a German SS car, the school bus, and even the bed in the final bunker scene. Trees were central to the design, representing both the Australian bush and German woods, visually linking the two settings. The yellow roof of the bus shelter was inspired by its description in the book.

Lighting added powerful effects to the story. Strobe flashes created the dramatic fall of Berlin, turning tree shadows into soldiers and crumbling buildings. Red lighting symbolised the swastika and bloodshed, while cool blue tones captured the rainy Australian countryside. Sound design blurred the lines between past and present by using everyday noises, like roadwork drills, to create both modern and historical atmospheres.

Together, the simple staging, lighting, and sound design helped bring the two worlds of the story to life, making the transitions between Australia and Nazi Germany seamless and engaging.

Once a script is developed, it is handed over to a director and rehearsals begin.

This is where the vision truly comes to life. For *Hitler's Daughter*, the director focused on exploring the idea of time crossing and characters moving between the past and present. This created opportunities for moments where the worlds of Mark and Heidi briefly intersect, allowing the audience to see how their stories and experiences connect. These moments highlight the central themes of the play, including morality, responsibility, and the ripple effects of history.

The technique of doubling was key to achieving this. Doubling means actors take on multiple roles, transforming physically and vocally to portray different characters. In *Hitler's Daughter*, the actors used changes in posture, tone of voice, and costume to seamlessly switch between characters, often in front of the audience. This made it clear when they were in the Australian countryside in the 1990s or in Nazi Germany during the 1940s.

This theatrical technique helped to weave the two worlds together, creating a fluid and immersive experience. It also encouraged the audience to form connections between the characters' journeys, deepening their understanding of the play's themes and ideas. By blending physical performance, vocal expression, and creative staging, the production brought the story's complex ideas to life in a way that was both engaging and thought-provoking.



**In
rehearsals**



Excerpt from Hitler's Daughter

Heidi

Are there any Jews near here?

Frau Mundt

No, of course not. But if one did escape and come near here the guards would catch them and send them back. There is no need to worry.

Heidi

I'm not worried.

Anna

Why would she worry? Why would Heidi think any differently?

Mark

But, she must have known. If she'd just started to think about it all...

Anna

Would you know if your parents were doing something wrong?

Mark

Of course, I would. But they wouldn't do anything really wrong anyway.

Anna

Are you sure? All the things your mum and dad believe in — have you ever really wondered if they are right or wrong? Or do you think they're right because that's what your mum and dad think so it has to be right?

Mark

Well, I... it's not the same.

This excerpt from *Hitler's Daughter* highlights the play's focus on questioning morality and the beliefs we inherit. Heidi's conversation with Frau Mundt shows how wrong actions, like the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany, were accepted as normal by many people. Frau Mundt's calm response reveals how people can ignore harm when it's part of their world.

Anna and Mark's discussion brings this idea into the present. Anna challenges Mark with questions like, "Would you know if your parents were doing something wrong?" Mark struggles to answer, showing how hard it can be to question what we've been taught to believe.

This moment asks the audience to think about how their own beliefs are shaped by family, culture and society. It raises an important question: How do we know what is truly right or wrong? By exploring these ideas, the play encourages young people to reflect on their own responsibilities.

Excerpt from Hitler's Daughter

Mark

How did great, great grandpa get our farm?

Dad

What? He bought it.

Mark

He didn't steal it from the Aborigines?

Dad

No, of course not. It wasn't like that in those days, anyway. No one thought of it as stealing.

...

Mark

But what if he did take it from the Aboriginal people, just suppose. It wouldn't be our fault, would it?

...

Dad

Mark, give it a rest, would you?

Mark

You told me that if we disagreed about anything we should talk about it. You said—

Dad

I haven't got time for this.

Mum

Mark, that's enough.

Mark

But Mum, what if everyone thought a really bad person was right? Like all the German people thought Hitler was right?

Mum

I don't think all the German people thought Hitler was right. It was a totalitarian country. If you tried to speak out you were sent to a concentration camp.

Mark

Did people protest?

Mum

No idea. I suppose so. Here's your lunch.

Mark

Mum, if Hitler had been in power, would you have protested?

Mum

Of course.

Mark

Even if it meant going to prison?



This excerpt from Hitler's Daughter shows Mark challenging his parents about the past and their beliefs. He questions how their family got their farm and compares it to people in Nazi Germany who accepted Hitler's rule without speaking out.

Mark's questions about Aboriginal land and his family's history make his parents uncomfortable, as they avoid giving clear answers. When he asks if his mum would have protested under Hitler, her uncertain response highlights how hard it can be to imagine standing up against wrongs, especially when it's risky.

This scene encourages audiences to think about their own beliefs, question the past, and consider what they might do when faced with moral choices. It's a reminder that understanding history and taking responsibility for our actions is an important part of making a better future.



Let's chat with Sandie Eldridge



What were the main challenges you faced in staging *Hitler's Daughter*?

One of the biggest challenges was creating two distinct worlds—Germany in the 1940s and a bus stop in the Australian bush—while working with only four actors playing fourteen characters. The staging had to be simple and multifunctional. For instance, the bus stop bench became Mark's mother's car, a German SS car, a school bus, and even the bed in Hitler's bunker. We used creative lighting, like a single bulb, to transform the bus stop into Hitler's bunker. Balancing practicality for a touring production with the emotional weight of the story required a lot of thought and collaboration with our creative team.

How did you approach depicting Hitler and his impact on stage?

We portrayed Hitler as a shadow—an ominous, monstrous presence—lit up on the back cyclorama. This was inspired by my research into German fairytales, where darkness often symbolizes evil. The cyclorama also featured symbols like the swastika and maps of concentration camps to provide historical context. Lighting and colour were essential: in Germany, we used the red of the swastika to evoke blood and destruction, while in Australia, cool blues reflected a world that was cold, wet, and disconnected from that violence. These design choices helped blur the lines between past and present, making history feel alive and relevant.

What do you hope audiences take away from *Hitler's Daughter*?

I hope audiences, especially young people, reflect on the importance of empathy, compassion, and responsibility. The play asks us to consider how the past influences the present and how our choices shape the future. It's about standing on the side of the caring and kind, even in difficult times. By acknowledging our shared humanity and the lessons of history, we can create a better future—not just for ourselves but for all of humanity.

To bring it all together, actors help create characters, tell the story and bring the world of the play to life.

An actor's role is to bring characters to life, whether they are based on real people or entirely fictional. In *Hitler's Daughter*, the main characters are Mark, Anna, and Ben, each distinct in personality and development:

- **Mark:** A quiet and intelligent 11-year-old who becomes deeply involved in Anna's story. By the final scenes, he imagines himself as a concentration camp guard, grappling with questions of morality.
- **Anna:** Thoughtful, serious, and highly intelligent, Anna is also 11 years old. The actor playing Anna also takes on other roles, including Mark's Mum, a farmer's wife, and Fraulein Gelber, showing versatility.
- **Ben:** Loud, funny, and boisterous, Ben adds humour to the story. The same actor also plays Mark's Dad, creating a strong contrast between roles.
- **Heidi:** Hitler's fictional daughter, described as small and dark like her father, with a birthmark on her face and a limp, symbolising her vulnerability and connection to Hitler.

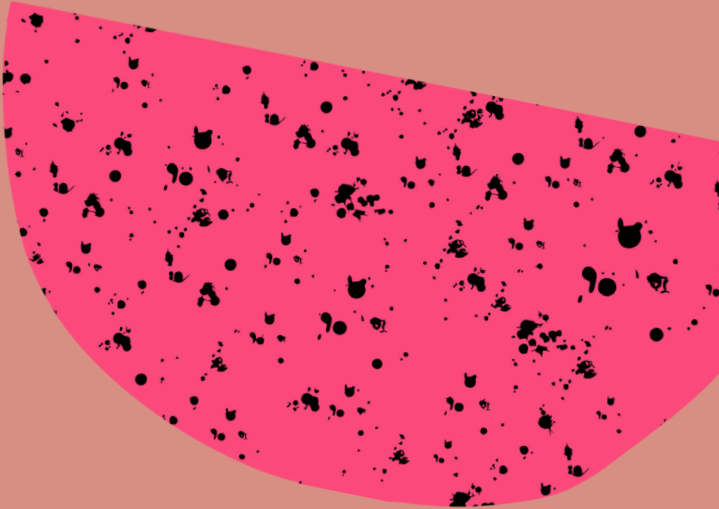
Rather than having an actor play Hitler, he is portrayed as a shadow, symbolising evil and the darker aspects of humanity. His presence is felt through prerecorded voiceovers, adding an eerie and symbolic layer to the production.

This approach to characterisation, where actors play multiple roles and use both physicality and voice to create transformations, enriches the storytelling and highlights the themes of identity, morality, and humanity in the play.

**Performing
the
show**

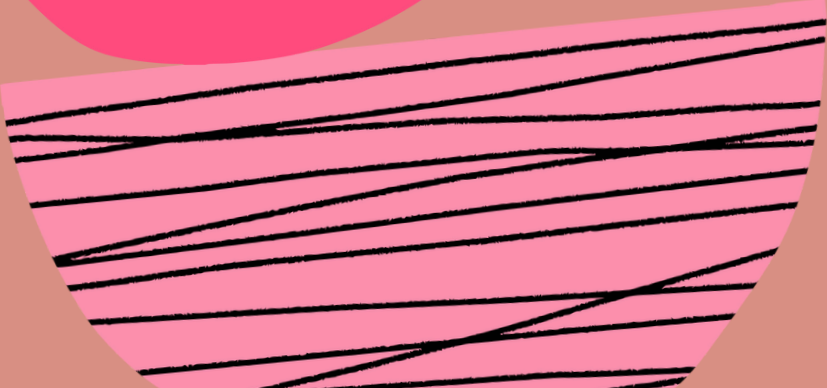
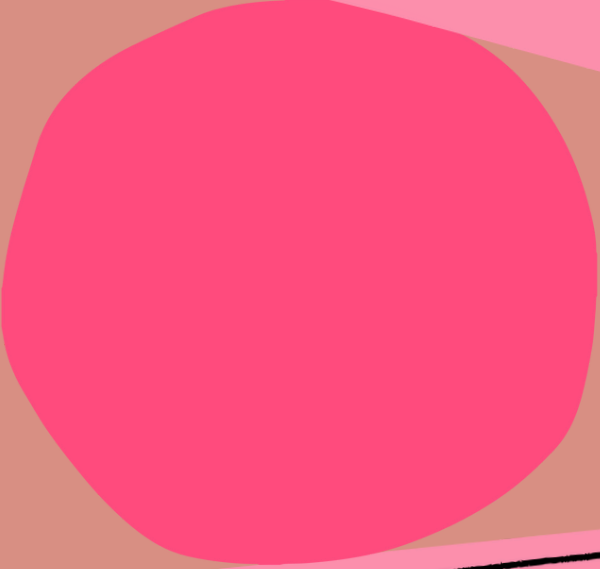
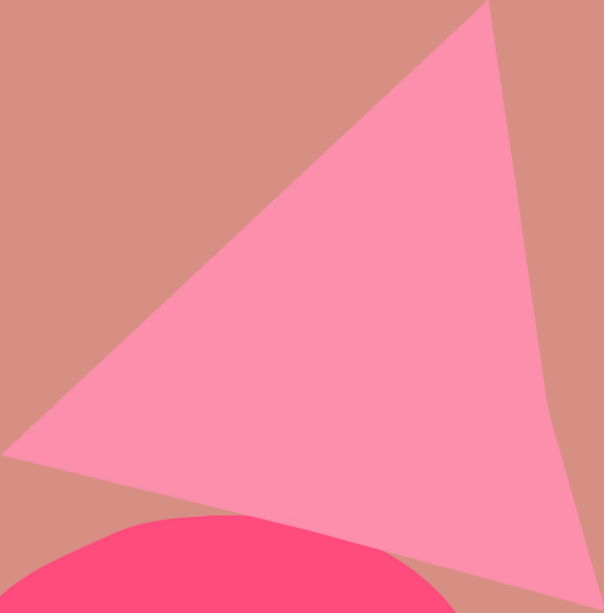






Classroom activities:

**before the
show**



Identifying values

Objective

To help students reflect on their own values and compare them to the play's exploration of morality and responsibility.

How it works

- Facilitate a whole-class discussion using the following prompts:
 - Who influences your values the most in your life? Is it your family, school, friends, community, religion or country?
 - Do you feel like you have the freedom to choose what you believe in?
 - How have your values changed as you've grown up?
- Encourage students to share personal stories or experiences while connecting them to the historical context of the play. For example, discuss how propaganda in Nazi Germany influenced people's values and beliefs, and compare this to modern influences such as media or peer groups.

Morals and ethics debate

Objective

To encourage critical thinking and discussion about the moral dilemmas and ethical themes that are central to the play and its historical context.

How it works

- Set up five zones in the classroom to represent levels of agreement: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
- Present moral statements relevant to Hitler's Daughter and its themes, such as:
 - "We all have a responsibility to stand up for what we believe in."
 - "It's never okay to lie to someone."
 - "Every day, our choices affect other people."
 - "It's okay to disagree with a friend even if it's difficult."
- Students move to the zone that best represents their opinion and discuss their reasoning with others in their group.
- After each discussion, invite a few students to share their thoughts with the entire class. Encourage them to reflect on how these moral dilemmas relate to the play and its characters.

Exploring values through improvisation

Objective

To help students connect with the values presented in the play, such as courage, responsibility, guilt and acceptance, through movement and improvisation.

How it works

- Begin by introducing the key values from Hitler's Daughter and discussing their significance in the play's themes. Use examples from history and the play to provide context (e.g., courage in standing up against injustice, guilt in reflecting on inherited responsibility).
- Ask students to walk around the room. Call out a value (e.g., "responsibility"), and students pair up to create a freeze frame that represents their interpretation of that value in 10 seconds.
- Repeat the process, gradually increasing the group sizes to three, four or larger groups. Add complexity by calling out the opposite of the value and ask students to create contrasting freeze frames.
- For the final task, divide the class into small groups and assign each group a specific value. Groups devise a short scene that portrays this value using any theatrical style. Emphasise the importance of tension, dynamics and a climactic moment in their performance.
- Groups perform their scenes for the class, and the audience guesses the value being portrayed, discussing how it connects to the play and historical context.

Historical role-playing

Objective

To help students empathise with historical perspectives and understand the complexities of life in Nazi Germany.

How it works

- Assign each student a historical role, such as a German citizen, a Jewish person, a member of the Nazi Party, or a resistance fighter.
- Provide background information about their role and ask them to imagine a day in their life during the 1930s or 1940s.
- In small groups, students discuss their perspectives on events such as the rise of Hitler, the Nuremberg Laws, or Kristallnacht.
- Afterward, facilitate a class discussion about the diversity of experiences and the moral challenges people faced during this time.

Historical context brainstorm

Objective

To introduce the historical background of Nazi Germany and its relevance to Hitler's Daughter.

How it works

- Divide students into small groups and provide each group with a key term or topic, such as The Holocaust, Nazi propaganda, Aryan ideology or Resistance movements.
- Ask groups to create a mind map of what they already know about their topic, including facts, images and emotions they associate with it.
- Provide additional context or resources for each group to deepen their understanding. For example, show a propaganda poster or discuss an example of resistance like the White Rose group.
- Groups present their findings to the class, connecting their topic to the themes of Hitler's Daughter. Conclude with a discussion about how these historical events might influence characters and plot points in the play.

Exploring propaganda through visual analysis

Objective

To analyse how propaganda was used in Nazi Germany and its relevance to the play.

How it works

- Display examples of Nazi propaganda posters and discuss the messages they conveyed.
- Ask students to identify the techniques used (e.g., symbolism, slogans, emotional appeals) and discuss their impact on people's beliefs and values.
- Have students create a poster that could serve as a counter-propaganda message, promoting themes of inclusion and diversity.
- Link this activity to Hitler's Daughter by discussing how propaganda influenced the society in which Heidi's story might have existed.





Classroom activities: *after the* **show**

Thematic discussion

Objective

To critically analyse key moments in the play and their relevance to historical and moral themes.

How it works

- Divide the class into small groups and assign each group an excerpt from pivotal scenes, such as Scene 4 (where the story of Heidi begins to challenge perceptions) or Scene 9 (a moral turning point).
- Groups discuss the following questions:
 - What are the main issues or conflicts in the scene?
 - What important questions about morality, guilt, or responsibility are raised?
 - How does this scene reflect the play's historical context and themes?
- Groups present their analyses to the class, with time for peer questions and comments. Encourage connections to the broader context of Nazi Germany and contemporary social issues.

Character profiling

Objective

To deepen understanding of the play's characters and their roles in exploring themes of morality and responsibility.

How it works

- Ask students to select a character from the play (e.g., Heidi, Anna, or Mark) and create a detailed character profile using the following prompts:
 - What details do we know about this character from the script?
 - Write five things this character would say about themselves when alone, five things they would say about themselves to others, five things others would say about them behind their back, and five things others would say to their face.
- Discuss how the character's traits reflect the play's broader themes, such as the tension between guilt and responsibility or the impact of inherited history.
- Encourage students to present their profiles to the class, comparing interpretations and insights.

Embracing diversity

Objective

To connect the play's themes to contemporary issues of inclusion and tolerance.

How it works

- Facilitate a discussion with prompts such as:
 - What does it mean to embrace diversity in our everyday lives?
 - How does prejudice impact individuals and communities?
 - What can we learn from the play about standing up against injustice or bias?
- Encourage students to share real-world examples of how they've witnessed or experienced inclusion, exclusion, or prejudice.
- Conclude by reflecting on how the lessons of Hitler's Daughter can be applied to their own lives and communities.

Mapping moral dilemmas

Objective

To connect the play's moral dilemmas with historical events and personal responsibility.

How it works

- Provide students with a flowchart template and a moral dilemma from the play, such as whether Heidi is responsible for her father's actions.
- Ask students to map out the choices available, their potential consequences, and the ethical questions each choice raises.
- Once complete, have students compare their flowcharts and discuss how these dilemmas reflect the real-world choices faced by people living in Nazi Germany (e.g., to resist or comply).
- Conclude by discussing how moral dilemmas from the play relate to modern issues, such as standing up to injustice or addressing inherited responsibility.

Character exploration

Objective

To deepen students' understanding of the play's characters and their motivations.

How it works

- Select a few key characters (e.g., Heidi, Anna, Mark) and have students volunteer to "become" one of these characters.
- Other students take turns asking the characters questions about their actions, thoughts, and feelings in the play. For example:
 - Heidi, do you believe you are responsible for your father's actions?
 - Anna, what emotions did you feel as you heard Heidi's story?
- Encourage students in the hot seat to respond in character, using evidence from the play to inform their answers.

Performing a scene

Objective

To explore the dramatic structure and emotional depth of the play through performance.

How it works

- Assign groups of three a specific scene from the play, such as a key interaction between Anna and Heidi or a climactic moment involving moral reflection.
- Groups analyse the scene, focusing on staging elements like entrances, exits, gestures, levels, and timing. Emphasise the importance of creating an engaging and dynamic performance by identifying the scene's turning points or climaxes.
- Rehearse and perform the scenes for the class, followed by a reflective discussion on how the performance highlighted the themes and emotional conflicts in the play.
- Optionally, have the class critique the performances, focusing on how effectively the scenes conveyed the intended message and tension.



Australian curriculum links

English curriculum links

Stage 3

- ACELT1608: Discuss how characters, events, and settings are portrayed in texts, and their appeal to different audiences.
 - Activities such as Script Analysis: Character Profiling and Hot-Seating encourage students to analyse how characters like Heidi or Anna are portrayed in Hitler's Daughter, their motivations, and how they resonate with the audience.
- ACELT1610: Understand, interpret, and experiment with ways in which narratives are structured to engage readers and audiences.
 - Activities like Performing a Scene and Scene Analysis: Thematic Discussion explore how the play's structure creates tension and engagement through climactic moments.
- ACELY1699: Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts.
 - Activities such as Exploring Propaganda through Visual Analysis help students interpret the ideas presented in historical propaganda and compare them to the values portrayed in the play.
- ACELY1709: Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text.
 - Historical Context Brainstorm and Scene Analysis: Thematic Discussion require students to examine how Hitler's Daughter uses structure and language to explore complex themes like guilt, responsibility, and prejudice.
- ACELT1613: Present a point of view about literary texts, using appropriate metalanguage, and reflect on the viewpoints of others.
 - Activities like Discussion: Embracing Diversity and Morals and Ethics Debate engage students in presenting and defending viewpoints while responding to others' perspectives.

Stage 4

- ACELT1619: Analyse and explain the ways text structures, language features, and visual features of texts are designed to engage audiences.
 - Activities such as Performing a Scene allow students to reflect on how dramatic elements are used to engage the audience emotionally and intellectually.
- ACELT1620: Explore the interconnectedness of texts, contexts, and cultural perspectives.
 - Historical Role-Playing and Mapping Moral Dilemmas link the play's themes to historical contexts, encouraging students to understand how context shapes narratives.
- ACELT1626: Understand how themes and ideas can be explored in and through different forms of texts.
 - Activities such as Exploring Values Through Improvisation demonstrate how values and themes can be represented through dramatic and literary forms.
- ACELT1627: Recognise and analyse differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people, and concerns represented in texts.
 - Activities like Hot-Seating and Discussion: Embracing Diversity allow students to engage with differing perspectives on themes like prejudice, inclusion, and responsibility.
- ACELT1807: Recognise and explain differing viewpoints in texts about the world, cultures, individuals, and concerns.
 - Activities such as Scene Analysis: Thematic Discussion encourage students to engage critically with diverse viewpoints presented in the play and connect them to broader societal concerns.

History curriculum links

Stage 3

- ACHASSI098: Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations.
 - Historical Context Brainstorm allows students to gather and synthesise information about Nazi Germany and its connection to the play.
- ACHASSI104: Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, and issues.
 - Historical Role-Playing and Morals and Ethics Debate engage students in exploring multiple perspectives on the moral dilemmas and historical events linked to the play.
- ACHASSI099: Sequence information about people's lives and events.
 - Mapping Moral Dilemmas requires students to trace choices and consequences, linking historical events to personal responsibility.

Stage 4

- ACHASSI157: Explain different perspectives on events or actions.
 - Activities such as Discussion: Identifying Values and Scene Analysis: Thematic Discussion explore how perspectives on historical events and values differ across individuals and cultures.
- ACHASSI162: Analyse how beliefs and values influenced the actions of people in the past.
 - Exploring Propaganda through Visual Analysis examines how Nazi propaganda shaped societal values and actions.
- ACHHS155: Identify and analyse the causes and effects of events and developments in the past.
 - Historical Role-Playing and Historical Context Brainstorm help students understand the broader societal and historical impacts of events like the Holocaust.

Drama curriculum links

Stage 3

- ACADRM035: Explore roles and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation, and process drama.
 - Exploring Values Through Improvisation directly engages students in using dramatic action to explore themes.
- ACADRM037: Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood, and atmosphere.
 - Activities such as Performing a Scene focus on using voice and movement to convey meaning effectively.
- ACADRM036: Use story structures to shape dramatic action.
 - Script Analysis: Character Profiling encourages students to explore how character and narrative shape the drama.
- ACADRR038: Respond to drama, expressing thoughts about its meaning.
 - Activities such as Hot-Seating encourage students to articulate their interpretations of the play and its themes.

Stage 4

- ACADRM040: Analyse how the elements of drama are combined in devised and scripted drama.
 - Scene Analysis: Thematic Discussion encourages students to examine how tension, characterisation, and narrative elements work together.
- ACADRM041: Use voice and movement to sustain character and situation.
 - Performing a Scene requires students to focus on sustaining their character's emotions and motivations.
- ACADRM042: Experiment with dramatic forms, performance styles, and conventions.
 - Exploring Values Through Improvisation encourages experimentation with different styles, from naturalism to physical theatre.
- ACADRM044: Perform devised and scripted drama.
 - Performing a Scene involves rehearsing and presenting scripted scenes from Hitler's Daughter.
- ACADRR045: Evaluate how drama can communicate ideas.
 - Hot-Seating and Mapping Moral Dilemmas encourage students to reflect on how the play conveys themes of guilt, responsibility, and historical impact.

