



Yong

Classroom Learning Pack

monkey
baa

Monkey Baa respectfully acknowledges the Custodians of this nation and honours their continued cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, waters and seas.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, on whose land we work, live and share stories.

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Hello!

This learning pack has been created to support teachers and students engaging with Yong. The pack follows Yong's journey from China to the goldfields of Australia, providing both the story of the play and its historical context, along with activities. It is suitable for Years 5–8 and includes English, History and Drama activities linked to the Australian Curriculum.

The activities in this pack align with the General Capabilities and Cross-curriculum Priorities of Literacy, Creative and Critical Thinking, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding, and Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia.

Teachers should refer to their relevant state or national curriculum guidelines to align activities with specific outcomes or assessment criteria.



About Monkey Baa

We're a national Australian theatre company creating extraordinary theatre for young people. For nearly three decades we've been making shows that spark imagination, creativity and a lifelong love of the arts.

Our productions go on big journeys across Australia and beyond, reaching over 60 communities each year. We perform in busy cities and make sure to visit regional and remote towns. We work closely with schools, local groups and charities so that every young person has the chance to experience the joy of theatre.

Whether it's coming to see a show, joining a workshop at school, doing work experience with us or being part of our Youth Advisory Council, there are so many ways for young people to connect with our work.

We respect young people as an audience of now, not just the future. We love working together to shape everything we do and some of our most creative moments have been co-created with them.

About the show

Set against the backdrop of the Australian gold rush of 1857, *Yong* is a new Australian play by Jenevieve Chang. Mixing historical fact and narrative fiction, *Yong* takes us on a journey across land and sea, from China to the goldfields of Australia.

Yong and his father leave their small village and travel across the seas, hoping to strike gold and find their fortune in the goldfields of Ballarat. However, despite his family's desperate need for money, *Yong* does not want to be on this journey. On the surface, he appears to be an honourable son, but bubbling beneath is a deepening resentment toward his father and a longing for home. Faced with momentous change, *Yong*'s courage and inner strength are tested, and through overcoming difficult challenges, he discovers a resilience in himself that he never knew he had.

**Based on the book *Yong: The Journey of an Unworthy Son* by Janeen Brian, published by Walker Books Australia Pty Ltd
Written for the stage by Jenevieve Chang**



Yong is a universally resonant story about a young boy who must learn to step out of the shadow of others' expectations to find himself. It explores what it means to be a son, what it takes to be a parent, and the push and pull of community.

Most of all, it shines a light on Australia's history, bringing focus to the sacrifices and contributions that have helped build the resilient nation we are today.

— Jenevieve Chang



Themes

Identity and cultural belonging

Yong's story centres on his struggle with identity and cultural belonging as he leaves his Chinese village for the Australian goldfields. He must balance maintaining his cultural identity with adapting to a new land, highlighting the universal need to stay connected to our roots while adjusting to new environments.

Family dynamics and relationships

Yong's relationship with his father is central to the play, marked by emotional complexities. He navigates the tension between being an honorable son and pursuing his own desires, highlighting the sacrifices families make, the expectations they face, and the dual nature of love and loyalty as both supportive and challenging.

Resilience and personal growth

Throughout the play, Yong faces challenges that test his resilience, from adapting to a new culture to enduring harsh conditions. These experiences foster his personal growth, transforming him from a reluctant traveler into a strong, determined individual who discovers new strengths within himself.

Migration and cultural exchange

Yong's journey from China to Australia mirrors the broader experience of migration and cultural exchange. The goldfields, where people from diverse backgrounds converge, showcase the complexities of cultural interaction and adaptation.

Creatives

Writer

Jenevieve Chang

Composer

Max Lambert

Sound Designer

Zac Saric

First Nations Consultant

Richard Frankland

Company Stage Manager

Emily Phillips

Director

Darren Yap

Lighting Designer

BROCKMAN

Adaptation Consultant

Sandra Eldridge

Illustrations

Kim Siew

Technical Coordinator

Jessica Pizzinga

Production Designer

James Brown

Movement Director

Angie Diaz

Chinese Cultural Consultant

Charles Zhang

Photography

Tiffany Garvie

Performer

Alan Zhu

Yong: interactive experience



Follow Yong's journey from China to the goldfields of Australia and the narrative of the play, with historical context, activities for young people to do in the classroom and narration from the theatremakers.

Find the interactive experience here:
yong.monkeybaa.com.au

Behind the Scenes

The vision

At Monkey Baa, we find inspiration everywhere. From the world around us and the people we share it with. We believe in the power of stories to connect us all, which is why our plays are based on picture books and novels by Australian authors.

Our play Yong is based on a novel by Janeen Brian. When our Artistic Director, Eva Di Cesare, and Artistic Associate, Sandra Eldridge, first read the book, they saw its potential for the stage straight away.

They were drawn to Yong's journey as a young boy arriving in Australia during the gold rush, and how the story explored courage, identity and belonging. They felt it was an important story to tell, showing the history of Chinese migration to Australia through the eyes of a young person, and reflecting experiences of migration that are still relevant today.

Seeing this potential, Eva brought together a team of talented creatives to turn the novel into a stage production. Throughout 2021 and 2022, they worked hard to adapt the story for theatre, creating a play that blended text, movement and design to bring Yong's world to life. The team focused on making sure the play was truthful, engaging and stayed true to the heart of the original book.

Let's chat with Eva

What is your role as Artistic Director of Monkey Baa?

My role is to lead the company's artistic vision. I decide which works to present to our audiences through consultation with artists, young people and our team.

What drew you to Janeen Brian's novel?

I have known about Janeen Brian's book for a few years. We were drawn to this story because its protagonist is a young boy who is forced to undertake a huge physical journey. However, he is also on a very personal and emotional internal journey. We have always been attracted to stories rooted in history, particularly those where characters go through extraordinary situations and are transformed by the end.

Why did you want to adapt the novel into a play?

We loved the drama in the story, and the characters were so rich. We were keen to explore how we could turn this story with all these characters into a one-person show. We could see straight away that it could become a fascinating and dramatic work for the stage, starting with a huge storm at sea. Another reason was the challenge of taking something clearly set in the 1850s and finding ways to make it relevant to today's young people, so they connect emotionally with Yong.



The script

Just like a poet writes poems, a playwright writes plays. They create the characters, scenes and plots that bring stories to life on stage using dialogue and stage directions. *Yong* was written by Chinese-Australian playwright Jenevieve Chang.

To develop the script, the Monkey Baa team travelled to Ballarat, where the play is set. There, Jenevieve and the team worked on the play's structure, dialogue, stage directions and design elements like costumes, props, sets, lighting and sound to create a world that felt right.



Let's chat with Jenevieve

What is your role as a playwright?

I adapted Janeen Brian's book for the stage, shaping it into a one-person show for young audiences. This meant thinking about how to represent the many worlds of the story in a single theatre design. I'm grateful to Sandie Eldridge for getting me started on this journey.

What is exciting about adapting *Yong* for the stage?

I loved stepping into the mind of a 13-year-old boy from the 19th century dealing with timeless issues like homesickness, feeling not good enough and losing a parent. It's also a privilege to share the rich history of Chinese settlers, their struggles, hopes and contributions.

What challenges did you face?

Adapting the story raised big questions about what to keep, leave out or reimagine. As a Chinese-Australian, navigating my cultural connection to the material while respecting the source felt like walking a tightrope. I'm lucky to have had a supportive team who encouraged rigorous dialogue and built my confidence.

Let's chat with Darren

What is your role as a director?

My job is to bring Yong to life on stage. I work closely with the actor and with the set, costume, lighting and music designers. I guide everyone to create a production where all the elements work together to tell the story clearly and powerfully.

What drew you to direct Yong?

As an Australian-Chinese person, I feel a strong connection to Yong's story. It reflects my own family history – my great-great-grandfather came to Australia during the gold rush and never returned to China. With my father now 94, I relate to Yong's feelings of wanting to prove himself to his father. Directing this play feels personal and important because it honours the history of Chinese-Australians.

What challenges have you faced?

Directing a new play always comes with challenges. Yong is a one-person show, so I've had to find ways for the actor to play many roles and keep the story clear and engaging. Some ideas work straight away, others need refining. That's the challenge and the joy of creating something new.

The rehearsal

A rehearsal is a practice before performing a play. Actors learn lines and movements (blocking), designers create the setting, composers write music and playwrights develop the script, all guided by the director.

The director leads the production, guiding actors and shaping how the play looks and feels. Director Darren Yap worked with the team on staging and design. As an Australian-Chinese person, Darren felt a deep connection to the story.



The design

There are many types of theatre designers, including costume, set, lighting, projection and prop designers. They work with the director, producer and sometimes the playwright to shape the visual world of a play.

Designer James Browne created the sets, costumes and props. Sets create the setting for a play, from a simple chair to an elaborate street scene. Costumes are the clothes actors wear to show their character. Props are objects actors use on stage, separate from costumes and scenery, and help bring the world of the play to life.



Let's chat with James

What is your role as a designer?

As the designer for Yong, I start by reading the script to understand what's needed visually. I then meet with the director to develop concepts for sets, props and costumes. Once finalised, I share these ideas with the team using research, sketches, plans and models to help everyone see the vision. Every detail is carefully considered.

What inspired your designs for Yong?

The script and original book were key inspirations, giving details about locations and scenes. I researched the characters, setting, time period and weather to inform the design. We wanted to blend traditional Chinese elements with colonial Australia to reflect both worlds.

What challenges did you face?

As a one-person show, we needed visual elements like projections, lighting and props to help tell the story and spark the audience's imagination. Everything also had to fit into a small truck, be collapsible, fit through theatre doors, be quick to set up and remain safe while looking spectacular.

Let's chat with Wern

What is your role as an actor?

My main role is to tell the story in the best way I can. I'm lucky to have the support of writer Jenevieve Chang and director Darren Yap, who guide me to the heart of the characters and themes. If I do my job well, I can share the story with the intention and emotion they envisioned.

How did you prepare to play Yong?

Preparing for this role has been very collaborative. Jenevieve created clear and clever characters, which really helps in a one-person show. Using that as a foundation, Darren and I worked together to bring the characters to life through physicality and voice. With their support, I've gained confidence to perform this piece and create distinct characters that keep the audience engaged for the whole play.

What challenges have you faced?

The biggest challenge is that it's a one-person show, so I play all the characters and tell the entire story by myself. That can be scary because there's nowhere to hide, and I have to stay fully engaged from start to finish. But knowing I get to share Yong's story with young people who might relate to him makes it feel worthwhile – and it's exciting too.

The performance

An actor interprets and portrays characters in a performance. These characters can be based on real people or be entirely fictional. In Yong, the role was originally created by Wern Mak and is now performed by Alan Zhu.

The actor plays not only Yong but also all the other characters in the story. While these characters are fictional, they are inspired by the experiences of Chinese and Australian people during the nineteenth century.





Yong's journey



Sailing from China

It has been three full moons since I last saw my grandma, my brothers and my baby sister. It feels like Father and I have travelled so far from our village that we'll soon drop off the edge of the world. — Yong

At the start of the play, Yong and his companions sail from China to Australia to seek their fortune in the goldfields. In the 1850s, news of the Australian gold rush reached China during the Qing Dynasty, leading many Chinese people to make the long and difficult journey hoping to find wealth. Between 1850 and 1870, many Chinese immigrants worked in the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales.

The play is set between Robe (Bunganditj country) in South Australia and Ballarat (Wadawurrung country) in Victoria, where Yong and his companions arrive. Like many Chinese migrants, Yong crosses dangerous seas with dreams of gold. Sea travel in the nineteenth century was uncomfortable and unsafe. Passengers brought their own clothing, utensils and bedding and faced storms, poor hygiene, cramped conditions, disease and limited hope of rescue if disaster struck, as few could swim and lifeboats were often insufficient.

Exploring Australia

I step onto the shore and the air makes me thirsty just from breathing. The brightness of the sun hurts my skin. It's so different from home. — Yong

Next in Yong's journey, he and his companions arrive in Australia. Many Chinese immigrants came from poor regions in southern China, driven by hardship and the hope of finding gold. Most went into debt under a credit system, where Australian businessmen paid for their passage, and immigrants repaid them with a share of any gold they found.

They were often dropped off in Robe, South Australia, and had to walk to the Victorian goldfields. In Ballarat, some worked growing food or building mining equipment, while others dug for gold. When surface gold ran out, many couldn't repay their debts and were left to survive alone.

Being far from home and family often led to sadness. To cope, they worked hard or spent time gazing out to sea, sometimes smoking a pipe for comfort.





Walking from Robe

Father finds a man to guide us to the goldfields of Ballarat. I ask Father how we will get there. We will walk, as we have always walked, he says. — Yong

After arriving in Robe, Yong and his companions began their long walk to the Ballarat goldfields. Like many Chinese gold seekers, they landed at Guichen Bay and camped on the beach until they could find work or shelter. Robe was a small port town in South Australia, and its population doubled overnight when Chinese immigrants arrived, eventually growing to 3,000.

Before heading to Victoria, they hired European guides and walked about 30 km (or 60 li) per day, digging wells for water and buying sheep for food. A li, or Chinese mile, varied depending on the terrain.

Along the way, travellers left messages for others by carving Chinese characters into tree bark. Some guides abandoned them, leaving them stranded, but despite these challenges, they continued their journey. Today, items like holy dollars and ginger jars found along the route remain as reminders of their travels.

Arriving in Ballarat

We discover dozens of men in bamboo working the soil,
clanking sounds of tools. — Yong

At the end of the play, Yong and his companions arrive in Ballarat and set up camp in the goldfields. Although relieved, they soon faced racism from European settlers. Chinese miners lived in a designated district under a Chinese protector, starting in canvas tents that sometimes became permanent structures. While praised for their hard work, they often faced hostility, especially when gold was scarce.

Their different appearance, language and customs made them targets for discrimination and violence, such as the Lambing Flat Riots in 1860-61, where European miners attacked Chinese camps, burned their tents and supplies and drove them away. Even as gold ran out and miners moved to Queensland, Chinese miners continued to face discrimination and violence wherever they went.





Settling in Australia

Father, I made it. I finished the journey you started. I finished the journey you wanted. And I made it mine. I have walked. And I have arrived. — Yong

After the play ends, it is suggested that Yong and his companions stay in Australia and build their lives here, contributing greatly to society. Many Chinese migrants opened stores, restaurants, teahouses and tailoring services or worked as herbalists, acupuncturists, interpreters and artisans. There were Chinese theatres and coach services between goldfield towns. Women also became entrepreneurs, panning for gold and starting successful businesses, breaking expectations for women at the time.

As gold was found in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Tasmania, more Chinese miners and entrepreneurs arrived, providing goods and services for their communities. Chinatowns grew in areas where they lived and worked, with businesses like eateries, grocery stores, markets and laundries. The Chinese became major suppliers of tea, furniture, silk and food.

From the gold rush to today, Chinese people have made enormous contributions to Australia's social, economic and cultural life.

A man in traditional Chinese attire, including a blue jacket, white pants with grey patches, and a black cap, is performing a ritual or dance on a stage. He is standing in front of a wooden ladder and a backdrop of blue curtains. The stage is lit with blue and white lights, and there are various props like a wicker basket and a hanging lantern in the background.

Before the show activities

Character diary

Students will develop a fictional immigrant character and write a diary entry from their perspective, imagining their arrival during the gold rush.

Materials

Background information on the gold rush (1850s–1870s), writing materials, and visual aids or maps showing goldfields and immigrant life.

Instructions

Provide an overview of the gold rush, highlighting the immigrants who came seeking fortune and the challenges they faced, such as language barriers, harsh living conditions and competition for gold.

Ask students to create a fictional immigrant character who has just arrived in Australia. Show images of goldfields and immigrant life to help them imagine their character's experiences, environment, and struggles.

Their diary entry should include

- First impressions of Australia
- Description of their work or role (miner, shopkeeper, cook, etc.)
- Interactions with others
- Personal thoughts, hopes, fears and hardships

Letter home

Students will explore Yong's experiences and emotions by writing a historical letter from the perspective of someone migrating to Australia during the gold rush.

Materials

Background information on the Australian gold rush, writing materials, and visual aids of the goldfields and immigrant life.

Instructions

Introduce the Australian gold rush, focusing on immigrants like Yong and his father. Discuss the hardships they faced, such as long journeys, rough conditions and strained relationships. Use visuals to help students imagine Yong's world.

Ask students to write a letter to a family member or friend back home, describing their daily life in the goldfields, their emotions (loneliness, frustration, homesickness), relationships with others and the hardships they face.

Students can share their letters aloud or display excerpts. Discuss the emotions and experiences portrayed, focusing on empathy for immigrant families like Yong's and how these experiences shaped their identity and relationships.

Dear Douglas,

It has been three weeks since I left Scotland and I miss you and our sisters very much. Life on this ship feels endless, each day drags on and on and on like a year.

In the first week, I met many interesting people. There is a young girl named Bonnie travelling with her father and little brother to Australia to search for gold, just like us. Bonnie reminds me of Freya, she's just as adventurous and loves animals. You should see her when a gull lands on the deck and tries to steal our lunch. She talks about all the strange animals in Australia. Kangaroos that can leap across a room in one bound, little bear-like creatures called koalas that sleep all day, (imagine that!) and giant birds that can't fly but run faster than the wind, she called them emus.

I can't wait to reach dry land and leave this creaky old ship behind, and I'm excited to see all the amazing things I've heard about in Australia.

Until I write again,

Stuart

Time capsule of reflection

Students will reflect on their understanding of history, empathy and cultural awareness by writing letters to their future selves.

Materials

Writing materials (paper, pens, envelopes), information about Yong's life and journey, container.

Instructions

Discuss empathy and cultural understanding with students. Introduce Yong's story and explore how stories like his broaden our perspectives and build empathy. Highlight the importance of reflecting on history and its impact on personal growth.

Ask students to write letters to their future selves, reflecting on empathy, cultural understanding and how historical stories like Yong's have shaped their thinking. Encourage them to include specific examples from Yong's journey that resonated with them. They can decorate and personalise their letters to make them meaningful.

Instruct students to seal their letters in envelopes. Collect and store them safely. Discuss how revisiting these letters in the future can support self-reflection and growth.

Packing for a long journey

Students will create a visual list of what an imaginary passenger might pack for a long sea journey to Australia.

Materials

Research tools, writing and drawing materials, and/or a device.

Instructions

Research what life was like for immigrants travelling by sea in the nineteenth century. Discuss the conditions on board and what passengers needed for the long journey. Suggested packing list items included: 6 shirts, 6 pairs of stockings (socks), 1 pair of shoes, 1 pair of boots, 1 warm coat or cloak, 1 light hat, 1 warm hat, 1 mattress (20 inches by six feet), 3 pairs of bedsheets, 2 blankets, 1 towel.

Ask students to create an imaginary character migrating to Australia in the nineteenth century. Give the character a name, profession and country of origin.

Decide what they would pack for their sea voyage, choosing from the list or adding their own items. Students will create a visual list of their character's packed items. This can be drawings, a collage or images found online.

Timeline of the gold rush

Students will create a visual timeline to show key events related to Chinese contributions during and after the Australian gold rush.

Materials

Pictures and descriptions of key events (provided), poster paper, markers, coloured pencils, glue.

Instructions

Discuss why timelines are useful and introduce the role of Chinese immigrants in the gold rush and their impact on Australian society.

Divide students into small groups. Give each group pictures and descriptions of key events from the 1850s onwards, including the growth of Chinatowns. Groups arrange the events in order and create a visual timeline, adding information or illustrations as needed. Each group presents their timeline and explains the significance of the events.

Finally, students write a short reflection on how these events impacted the Chinese community and Australian society, followed by a class discussion on their contributions and challenges.

Mapping Yong's journey

Students will map and recreate Yong's journey from Robe to Ballarat, following the route many Chinese travellers took during the gold rush.

Materials

Research tools, writing materials, and a large open space like a playground or hall.

Instructions

Students research the towns Yong and other Chinese immigrants passed through on their way to Ballarat and create a map showing the route, including Guichen Bay, Penola, Dergholm, Casterton, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Ararat, Buangor, Beaufort, Burrumbeet and Ballarat.

In a large space, students use materials like chalk or string to mark out the journey and distances between towns. They then walk the route, discussing what it might have felt like for Yong and others to travel such a long way on foot and reflecting on the physical and emotional challenges they faced.



1888 – Chinese Immigration Restriction Act
Australian colonies pass laws to further restrict Chinese immigration, leading later to the White Australia Policy.



1851 – Australian gold rush begins
The discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria attracts immigrants, including many from China, seeking their fortune.



1861 – Lambing Flat Riots
Anti-Chinese sentiment reaches a peak with violent riots, resulting in the forced expulsion of Chinese miners.



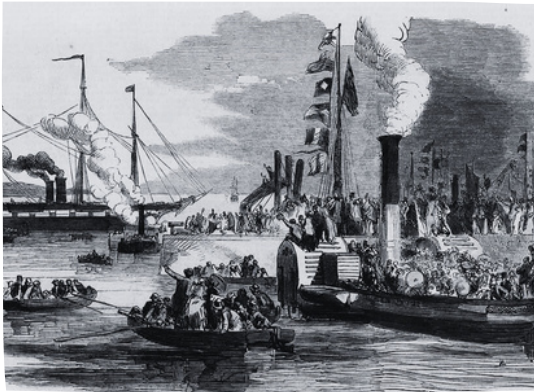
1901 – Federation and White Australia Policy
The new federal government enacts the Immigration Restriction Act, formalising the exclusion of non-European immigrants, including Chinese, from entering Australia.



1857 – Chinese miners settle in NSW
Chinese miners begin moving to the goldfields of New South Wales, notably around Lambing Flat (Young).



1870s – Decline of the gold rush
Many Chinese miners remain in Australia, transitioning from gold mining to other industries, including market gardening and storekeeping.



1854 – Large arrival of immigrants

Chinese miners arrive in significant numbers, primarily in Victoria, to work in the goldfields.



1920s – Chinese contributions to Australia

Despite restrictions, the Chinese community thrives in sectors like agriculture, trade, and retail, contributing to Australia's multicultural society.



1857 – Anti-Chinese riots at Buckland River

Tensions between European and Chinese miners escalate, resulting in violent clashes and the destruction of Chinese camps in Victoria.



1860s – Establishment of Chinese camps

As communities grow, Chinese miners begin establishing their own camps, bringing with them cultural practices and contributing to local economies.



1880s – Formation of Chinatowns

Permanent Chinese communities emerge in major cities, such as Melbourne and Sydney, forming Chinatowns that become hubs of cultural and economic activity.



1855 – Victorian gov imposes restrictions

A heavy landing tax is placed on Chinese immigrants arriving in Victoria, leading many to enter via South Australia and walk to the goldfields.

Character through movement

Students will explore character by experimenting with different types of walking and movement.

Materials

Large open space.

Instructions

Students spread out in the space and explore walking led by different body parts, imagining a string pulling them from their head, nose or stomach. For example, being pulled up by the head lifts them onto their toes, pulled by the nose leads with their neck and upper back, and pulled by the stomach tilts the pelvis forward.

As they move, ask questions like, “What kind of person walks like this? Are they old, young, confident, scared?” Students then pair up, introduce themselves in character and have a short conversation, repeating with different partners to develop their characters further.

Mapping Yong’s journey

Students will bring statues to life through improvisation, starting from frozen positions to create short scenes.

Materials

Large open space.

Instructions

In small groups of 4–5, students create statues as starting points for improvisation. The facilitator gives each group a scenario and location, such as arriving on the Australian shore, walking through bushland, setting up camp or digging for gold.

Team 1 stands in the space while Team 2 moulds them into statues. Once set, Team 2 returns to the audience and Team 1 brings their statues to life, improvising a short scene based on the scenario.

Repeat so each group has a turn to mould statues and perform their scene.

Exploring emotions

Students will explore and express different emotions through facial expressions and movement.

Materials

Large open space.

Instructions

Start with students sitting in a circle. The facilitator names an emotion, and Player A looks across the circle to Player B, showing that emotion with their face. The facilitator then names a new emotion, and Player B looks to Player C, expressing it. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

Next, divide students into small groups. The facilitator calls out emotions in quick succession, and each group creates physical shapes to show each emotion without speaking, holding each pose until the next emotion is called. Emotions could include love, hate, fear, embarrassment, regret, suspicion and passion.

Finish with a discussion about the emotions explored, how they affect us and the different ways people experience and express them.

Building a ship

Students will create the sounds of the ocean and a ship at sea using their voices and bodies.

Materials

Large open space.

Instructions

Start by discussing how sound and physical storytelling create immersive environments. Explain how voices, bodies and teamwork can build the soundscape and image of a ship in a storm.

Have students sit in a circle. Each student adds a sound with their voice or body to represent elements of a stormy sea, like waves crashing, ship creaking, wind howling, thunder rumbling or lightning flashing. Layer the sounds together to build a full soundscape.

Divide students into two teams. Team 1 creates a frozen image of a ship at sea. One student enters the space and strikes a pose as part of the ship or sea. Others join in one by one until the full image is formed. Team 1 then adds small movements to bring the scene to life while Team 2 provides the soundscape. Switch roles so both teams create an image and provide sound.

Finish with a discussion about how sound and movement transform a space and the importance of teamwork in creating a unified performance.

After the show activities



Creating a play

Students will explore dramatic storytelling by adapting Yong's migration experience into a short play. This activity builds understanding of Yong's journey while fostering creativity, collaboration and theatrical skills.

Materials

Background information on Yong and the Australian gold rush, writing materials, and a performance space.

Instructions

Introduce Yong's story and discuss key events, focusing on his migration to Australia with his father during the gold rush. Talk about the elements of a play, such as characters, setting, conflict and resolution.

Divide students into small groups and assign each group a part of Yong's journey, like leaving China, arriving in Australia, life in the goldfields or his relationship with his father. Guide them to write a short play with clear characters, dialogue and key events, while staying true to Yong's experience and the gold rush setting. Explain play structure, including opening, rising action, climax and resolution.

Have each group rehearse and perform their play for the class. Finish with a discussion about the different portrayals of Yong's journey and the emotional and historical significance of each scene.

Book a workshop today

Our classroom workshops bring the magic of theatre making to thousands of students across Australia.

These dynamic sessions build courage through creativity, giving students practical skills across all areas of theatre. Our fun and flexible workshops can be tailored to suit your students' needs, abilities and areas of study.

Show workshops

Immerse your students in the world of our shows. These engaging, interactive workshops unpack themes through drama games and activities, supporting classroom learning and helping students connect more deeply with the story and its characters.

Theatre making workshops

Step behind the scenes and into the creative process. Our hands-on workshops build skills in acting, puppetry, playwriting, design and more. Each session is tailored to inspire students, giving them the tools to express themselves and tell their own stories.

To learn more or book a workshop, visit our website:
monkeybaa.com.au



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