

Ancient Anna: looking into the past

In this unit students develop and present a puppet play about an archaeological dig and make links with learning in Science and Technology.

They will:

- consolidate and extend belief in roles
- manipulate drama elements to enhance meaning
- show the consolidation and extension of movement and language skills
- critically evaluate drama.

Drama forms

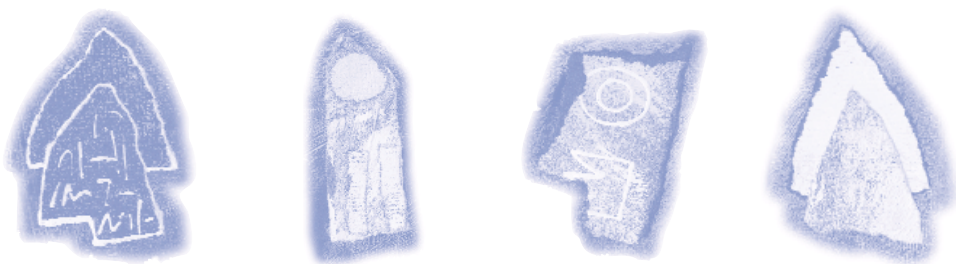
- improvisation
- script
- puppetry

Resources Materials

- long lengths of material for puppet costumes
- puppet designs and instructions
- stockings, tights, wadding, old T-shirts for stuffing
- wooden poles

Syllabus documents

- Board of Studies N.S.W. (1991). *Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus and Support Document*. Sydney.



Learning activities

Getting started

- Review activities in *Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus*, “An Ancient Land” (pp. 128-129). Students conduct individual research projects on topics related to ancient eras and civilisations and report on their research.
- Students-in-role as archaeologists of the future examine a school bag and other items from the 1990s. Teacher-in-role as research assistant asks them to note findings and draw conclusions about the era and lifestyle. They respond to specific questions posed by the teacher-in-role.
- Discuss the use of larger than life puppets in developing a play about an archaeological dig.

• Taking on roles in situations • Developing drama • Performing

- Brainstorm ideas and list on board. Identify roles and situations to be explored in the play. *Who is involved? Where will it happen? When? What could be discovered? What difficulties may be faced?*
- Select a group to write a broad outline of a script on cardboard.
- Some students work as a group on editing and refining the script while others make larger than life puppets (e.g. one and a half times a student's height is probably the maximum height that is manageable) and make their costumes.
- Students practise manipulating the puppets.
- Class listens to, revise and refines script, paying particular attention to appropriateness of language for the era in which the play is set.
- Students rehearse for performance, paying particular attention to voice, space and movement.



- Class performs drama.
- Use a video to show students their work.

Responding

- Students watch the video and discuss. *Did we work well, both alone and in groups? Did we develop an interesting play? Were the characters convincing? Did we use appropriate voice and movement? Did we make good use of space?*

Assessment of students

- Observe students' drama work and their process of working.
- Analyse students' oral and written comments, drawings and other responses to their drama work.
- Consider the following questions about students' learning in drama:
 - ♦ How well are they able to consolidate and extend belief in roles? How effectively do they use voice and gesture to characterise and communicate the roles? To what extent are they showing a serious commitment to their roles? To what extent are they able to depart from stereotypes and create new and challenging roles?
 - ♦ What evidence is there that students are manipulating drama elements to enhance meaning in their work? How are mood, focus, contrast and tension being developed and used in their work? To what extent are new techniques being sought out and tried? How is the use of symbol becoming more evident in their work? How effectively are students working together?
 - ♦ Which movement and language skills are being consolidated and extended as they perform? Which movement and language skills need further development?
 - ♦ How well are they able to critically evaluate drama? What else are they learning through their drama experiences?
 - ♦ How well did students understand drama puppetry?

Extension activities

- With students make a timeline of historical ages, including significant developments during the Stone, Copper, Bronze and Iron Ages. Compile an archaeological timeline of significant finds. Create improvisations around the discovery of these finds. Develop and sequence these around the timeline of events.
- Teacher-in-role as assistant curator at a museum specialising in ancient history. You are desperately seeking new ways to attract customers. Chair a meeting of researchers brought together to offer ideas for new exhibits based on their topics of expertise e.g. *The Rosetta Stone, Pompeii, Troy, The Great Pyramid, Stonehenge, Easter Island, Dead Sea Scrolls, Altamira Caves, Macchu Picchu, Chicken Itza, Tomb of the First Emperor, Bog Bodies, Ankor, The Ice Man, The Peruvian Ice Maiden*. Teacher-in-role asks researchers for key points to be promoted about the topic and ways to involve visitors in interactive hands-on experiences at the museum.

