



TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

FOR TEACHERS WORKING WITH STUDENTS IN GRADES K/P – 6

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS RESOURCE PACK

This resource pack is designed to deepen your students' engagement with both the book and the theatre experience before and after our visit. It includes photographs of the creative process, context for the play and in-depth classroom activities.

For teachers, this pack will:

- provide material to guide discussion about the book
- give you strategies to explore the learning potential offered by a theatre visit and how to develop children's responses
- enable you to use drama to develop literacy, particularly with reluctant writers
- increase your confidence in using drama in the classroom

The classroom activities have been designed to support and extend your students' experience of the performance and offer teachers ways to pick up on and explore the themes in the play, before and after our visit.

We use drama and storytelling as ways of exploring ideas that are relevant to the play. We employ characteristics such as **playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically** to enable effective learning. There are also links to key areas of learning:

- **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT;**
- **COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE;**
- **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT;**
- **EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN, AND**
- **UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD**

While the activities will not take an objective led approach, teachers will be able to establish links to the relevant curriculum objectives for their particular year group and can adapt them for their particular educational setting.

Our teacher resources always put drama at the centre of our activities. Working through drama allows children to explore subjects that matter to them within a fictional context, draw on their prior knowledge and apply it to new situations, develop language as they give expression to new understandings and develop **emotional intelligence and critical thinking** as they see things from different perspectives. It will also allow the students to take responsibility, make decisions, solve problems and explore possibilities from within the drama.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS AND TEACHER NOTES

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS (F-6)

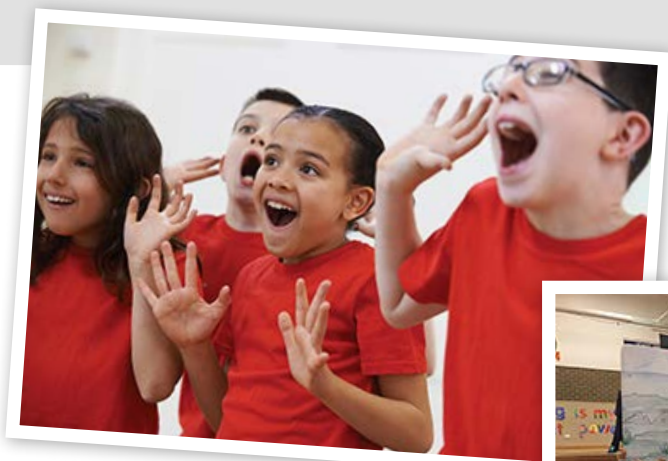
CURRICULUM AREA	CONTENT DESCRIPTORS
English	ACELY1650, ACELT1581, ACELT1591, ACELY1694
Drama	ACADRM027, ACADRM028, ACADRM029
Personal & Social Capability	Recognise emotions, show empathy, form positive relationships
Ethical Understanding	Explore rights and responsibilities, consider others' points of view

TEACHER NOTES

You can use this pack across multiple curriculum areas. It encourages:

- Compassion and active listening
- Verbal storytelling and drama participation
- Meaning making through writing and visual arts

Please tag @MeerkatProductions with any photos or class displays of your flowers with happy memories on! We love seeing your gardens of happy memories bloom!



ABOUT THE GARDEN OF BROKEN THINGS

SYNOPSIS OF OUR ADAPTATION

Sadie is a kind and curious 10-year-old who discovers an overgrown garden and a forgotten woman sitting quietly among the broken things. With her best friend Leo and help from the local community, Sadie brings life, laughter and love back into the garden and into the woman's life. Based on *The Garden of Broken Things* by Freya Blackwood. What begins as a chance encounter blooms into a powerful connection. This is a heartwarming story of noticing the unnoticed, finding friendship across generations, and the difference one small "hello" can make.

KEY THEMES IN OUR SHOW

- Kindness & Connection
- Intergenerational Friendship
- Being Seen and Heard
- Memory & Grief
- Community & Belonging
- Wonder & Imagination



READING TIME REVIEW

Review of the book by Maura Pierlot, May 12, 2024

Number 9 Ardent Street was a lonely place, with windows like sad eyes.

A story's first line can do so many things: capture attention, conjure emotions, pique curiosity, create anticipation, evoke nostalgia. The opening line to *The Garden of Broken Things* masterfully achieves all these things and more.

One day, Sadie follows a cat into the scrub behind Number 9 Ardent Street, where tangled vines concealed things from another time ... things that had come to a final halt. Deep in the undergrowth, she finds the cat sitting on the lap of a woman, bent with time and weariness. In this garden of broken things, Sadie shares the minutiae of daily life, her reportage stirring deep memories and love within the woman, sparking a heart warming transformation.

Freya Blackwood's atmospheric illustrations are a visual feast of colour, composition, and contrast, seemingly many things at once: delicate and emotive, playful and powerful, whimsical and grounded; energetic and calming. Negative space not only creates focus but expresses mood, leaving space for the images and readers to breathe. How the creator can do this so seamlessly and evocatively is a marvel.

The book description tells us *The Garden of Broken Things* celebrates curiosity and the joy of listening. But I think this rich, layered story is about so much more – grief and loss; perception and reality; belonging; memories and honouring the past; nature; resilience; growth and transformation; and ageing.

A gentle, joyful celebration of life and the many ways that we make connections and expand our world.

BEFORE SEEING THE PLAY

ACTIVITY 1: PREDICTION & BOOK TALK (LITERACY + CRITICAL THINKING)

A) Look at the title *The Garden of Broken Things*. What do you think it means? Draw what you imagine might be inside.

B) If something is “broken,” can it still have value? Write or draw your ideas.

C) Predict who the characters might be based on the title.

ACTIVITY 2: GARDEN OF IDEAS (VISUAL ART + ENGLISH)

Ask students to imagine a magical garden.

- What would they grow?
- What objects would they find?
- Who might live there?

Create a “garden mural” of their ideas.

ACTIVITY 3: EXPLORE THE WORD “KINDNESS” (SEL + ENGLISH)

What does kindness look, sound and feel like?

- Brainstorm ideas and role-play acts of kindness

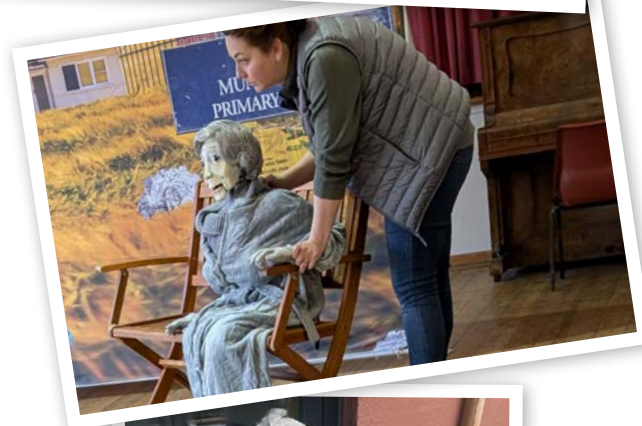
Kindness Web

Create a class web of kind actions.

- Write examples on paper leaves.
- Connect them with yarn to show how kindness spreads.

Question prompts:

- What does kindness sound like?
- What does kindness look like?
- How can you make someone feel seen?



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE DESIGNED TO EXPLORE STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO THE PLAY.

ACTIVITY 4: RE-TELLING THE STORY (LITERACY + DRAMA)

In a circle, have each student retell part of the show. Try to sequence the story from Sadie's neighbourhood to the garden cleanup.

ACTIVITY 5: WRITE A POSTCARD (LITERACY)

Pretend you are Sadie. Using Resource A, write a postcard to someone, describing the garden and how it made you feel.

ACTIVITY 6: CHARACTER HOT SEAT (DRAMA)

Place a chair at the front. Students take turns "becoming" the Lady or Mr Jenkins. Who answers the questions in role. Other students ask them questions to flesh out the characters story more.

EG: Classmates ask:

- What makes you happy?
- What was your dream when you were my age?
- What do you worry about?
- What would you change if you could?

ACTIVITY 7: INTERACTIVE DRAMA OR ROLEPLAY

Let students act out:

- An old person giving advice to younger ones.

ACTIVITY 8: REAL-WORLD CONNECTION:

- **Invite a Grandparent or Elder to school** – Let someone older visit the class to share a story, song, or skill. Kids ask questions and realise how much wisdom and love older people carry.
- **Class Discussion Prompt:**

"What do you think would happen if no one listened to older people or kept old things?"

"Can you think of a time when an older person helped you?"



THEMATIC EXPLORATION

ACTIVITY 9: "BEING SEEN" – WHAT DOES IT MEAN? (SEL + ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING)

Discuss how the Lady in the garden felt invisible.

- When have you felt seen or unseen?
- Create a poem or drawing titled: "You Saw Me."
- Role-play someone noticing another person at school.

ACTIVITY 10: EXPLORING EMOTIONS (DRAMA + WELLBEING)

Using freeze frames or tableaux, create moments from the play:

- Sadie discovering the garden
- The Lady responding to Sadie
- The community coming together
- Discuss what each character might be feeling.

DRAMA & PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 11: PHYSICAL THEATRE – "THE GARDEN GROWS"

As a group, use your bodies to become elements of the garden:

- A broken chair
- An overgrown vine
- A buzzing bee

Then slowly transform as the garden becomes alive again.

ACTIVITY 12: ROLE PLAY – THE POP-IN CAFÉ

In pairs or small groups, create scenes in Marjorie and Clive's café.

- Invent a customer and what they order
- Role-play their conversations



WRITING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 13: "ONE SMALL HELLO" (ENGLISH + SEL)

Inspired by the final song, write a short story or poem that begins with a small "hello" and ends in a friendship.

ACTIVITY 14: SADIE'S NEXT ADVENTURE (ENGLISH + CREATIVITY)

Where does Sadie go next? What new story does she uncover in her neighbourhood? Write or draw her next chapter.

REVIEW & REFLECT

ACTIVITY 15: PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Years 3–6 Use Resource B : To share your thoughts on the show

- What was the most memorable moment?
- What did the play make you think about?
- What do you think the garden symbolised?

Prep–Year 2 Use Resource B To share your thoughts on the show



TEACHER PACK LINK:

Sue Warren and Jemma Myors have created a teachers pack [HERE](#)

FEEDBACK & EXTENSION

Thank you for welcoming The Garden of Broken Things into your classroom. We hope your students keep their kindness blooming for a long time to come!

We love seeing your students' work! Please share photos, drawings or writing with us on social media and tag us: [@meerkatproductions](#)

Use Resource B for students to feed back on the production.



ABOUT MEERKAT PRODUCTIONS

At Meerkat Productions our goal is to provide a theatrical experience that makes students and teachers alike lean forward and engage rather than sit back and watch passively. We want the memory of our performance to be long lasting; we want the work we do to be inspirational and we want you to be counting down the days until our next visit!

Our Book Week shows aim to support Literacy in the classroom, and we have found during our 20 year history that most Primary school teachers identify an impact, particularly in engaging lower ability children as well as increasing enthusiasm for and motivation to write.

OTHER SHOWS

DID YOU KNOW MEERKAT PRODUCTIONS ALSO OFFERS OTHER IN-SCHOOL PERFORMANCES?



BOOK WEEK: YOUNGER READERS BOOK ADAPTATION



ANTI-BULLYING: BULLY BULL RING



**STORYTELLING & PUPPETRY:
GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES**



MINDFULNESS, MANAGING ANXIETY, RESILIENCE: MR HUFF



CHRISTMAS SHOW: RUDOLPH'S RECRUITS

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE
MEERKATPRODUCTIONS.COM.AU
OR GIVE US A CALL ON 1300 308 311**

RESOURCE A



Dear _____ ,

Today I saw _____
_____ .

It made me feel _____
_____ .

From _____

POST OFFICE
11/04/2019

RESOURCE B

TEMPLATE FOR STUDENTS IN GRADE 3-6

Here are some phrases that people might use to describe the experience of watching a piece of theatre.

For each pair, please mark a point on the scale towards whichever is closest to your experience of watching the performance today.

My concentration was wandering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I was completely absorbed by what was happening
I didn't feel like I was learning anything	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	My eyes were opened to some new ideas
It didn't really get me going	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I was gripped by the sights and sounds of the performance
There wasn't much sense of atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I noticed a real buzz in the audience
I didn't feel much connection with the characters/story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I felt I could really identify with the characters/story
It felt like time was passing slowly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I hardly noticed the time passing
I was mostly in my 'comfort zone'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I felt challenged and provoked
I felt tired and uninterested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I felt lively and enthusiastic
I didn't feel much connection with other audience members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It felt good to be sharing the experience with other people
There wasn't really much that touched me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I found aspects of the performance very moving
The performance didn't really hold my attention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I was often on the edge of my seat
There was nothing much new for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It got me thinking about things differently
I felt flat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I felt tense and excited
I don't feel much urge to discuss the performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I will be talking about the experience for some time to come
It didn't say much about my life or experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some aspects of the performance seemed relevant to my own life

TEMPLATE FOR STUDENTS IN KINDER/PREP TO GRADE 2

ENGAGEMENT AND CONCENTRATION

TIME PASSED...

REALLY
SLOWLY

--	--	--	--	--

REALLY
QUICKLY

LEARNING AND CHALLENGE

NEW IDEAS

REALLY
SLOWLY

--	--	--	--	--

REALLY
QUICKLY

ENERGY AND TENSION

EXCITEMENT

I NEARLY FELT
ASLEEP

--	--	--	--	--

I WAS REALLY
EXCITED

SHARED EXPERIENCE AND ATMOSPHERE

LOVED BEING HERE

I FELT LONELY

--	--	--	--	--

I LOVED BEING HERE
WITH EVERYONE

PERSONAL RESONANCE AND CONNECTION

FEELINGS

I DIDN'T FEEL
ANYTHING

--	--	--	--	--

I FELT REALLY
EMOTIONAL