

Monkey Baa

Teacher Resource Materials

FOX

*By Margaret Wild and Ron
Brooks*

*Created for the stage by Monkey Baa
and Siren Theatre Co.*

**Learning experiences
for
Year 3-6 students**

Vision

To be recognised nationally and internationally as a leader in the creation of meaningful and innovative theatre for young people, and to engage young audiences through the telling of Australian stories that entertain, inspire and encourage a greater understanding of the world and their place in it.

Monkey Baa

Theatre for Young People Ltd

Monkey Baa was established in 1997 by three actors, Tim McGarry, Sandra Eldridge and Eva Di Cesare. Based in Sydney, the company has achieved critical acclaim for its work and today enjoys a national reputation for producing quality theatre programs for young people. Australian stories adapted from established literature from well-profiled authors are presented with high production values. Monkey Baa's relationship with its audience is distinctive and many young people (including some from isolated areas) have the advantage of sharing the skills of Monkey Baa's creative team in comprehensive and inventive workshop programs.

Our **Mission** is to produce high quality theatre programs for young people, their families, teachers and communities throughout Australia and internationally.

Monkey Baa's goals are:

- To write and create high quality new Australian works for young audiences nationally and internationally.
- To develop and present quality theatre workshop programs accessible to all young people.
- To develop creative partnerships with other arts organisations.
- To achieve a financially stable organisation through diversified income streams – government (federal, state, local), corporate, philanthropic and self-generated.
- To develop and maintain a robust organisation led by highly skilled artists and administrators.

Monkey Baa has written, produced and toured Tim Winton's **The Bugalugs Bum Thief**, Gillian Rubinstein's **The Fairy's Wings**, Morris Gleitzman's **Worry Warts**, Andrew Daddo's **Sprung!** Stephen Michael King's **Milli, Jack and the Dancing Cat**, Susanne Gervay's **I Am Jack**, Sonya Hartnett's **Thursday's Child** and Jackie French's **Hitler's Daughter**. The script for **Hitler's Daughter** was published by Currency Press and the theatre production received the **2007 Helpmann Award for Best Children's Presentation**.

In 2010 Monkey Baa will premiere Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks' incredible story **FOX** and will remount their highly successful production of **Hitler's Daughter**. The company will also creatively develop a theatrical script based on Duncan Ball's **Emily Eyefinger** which will premiere in July 2011.

For more information about Monkey Baa please visit www.monkeybaa.com.au

Monkey Baa isn't just about putting good books on stage. It shows kids how ideas and characters can be translated from one art form into another, keeping the essence of the book but refining it. It's an adventure of the mind and spirit. It makes kids think as well as feel.

JACKIE FRENCH

Fox

A picture book by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks

Fox by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks is an award-winning magical picture book combining stunning images with an inspiring and thought provoking text. The stage adaptation of this text combines a haunting score and breathtaking physicality through which the heart will soar as friendship triumphs.

Magpie is injured in a bushfire but she discovers that riding atop her friend, one-eyed Dog, as he runs through the bush, feels almost the same as flying. “FLY, DOG, FLY! I will be your missing eye and you will be my wings.”

Fox arrives and tempts Magpie with an even faster ride. Desire, loyalty and friendship become confused and after an exhilarating ride, Fox dumps Magpie far out in the desert. Abandoned and alone Magpie begins the long journey home.

Teacher Resources Materials

Monkey Baa has developed a set of support materials to enhance attendance at this wonderful production. The materials focusing on the integration of creative arts in the classroom back-up existing teacher resources and include both pre and post performance activities. They are designed to prepare students, engage and extend their thinking in regard to the performance and connect to a broader range of curriculum areas.

The teacher notes target students in Stages 2-3 as well as providing suggestions for exploration within drama and English to Higher School Certificate level. Focusing primarily on engaging students in the production and story via the creative arts (drama, dance, music and visual art), activities are presented in a step-by-step format allowing teachers with minimal or no experience in the arts to implement them successfully.

The key themes addressed within the production include:

- love and belonging
- temptation
- risk and betrayal
- friendship

These materials are designed to be ‘teacher-friendly’, guiding you through step by step learning experiences. While all activities provide specific detail, minor adaptations should be made depending on the specific cohort, and expectation for ‘product’ and depth of discussion. In addition, suggested classroom management strategies for doing drama in the classroom have been included to assist with the implementation of the creative arts activities in this resource kit.

Classroom Management Suggestions for Drama

Drama, along with other areas of the creative arts, can be used to support learning through integration with a variety of key learning areas. These opportunities provide students the opportunity to explore ideas and issues in a meaningful and realistic manner. Drama, in particular, has been considered to assist with the development of self esteem, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and in the development of focus and team building through fun activities.

Incorporating drama in school classrooms presents a number of challenges for teachers, but reap rewards for all involved when attempted. The following suggestions are designed to provide some food for thought in relation to doing drama in the classroom and are intended as a guideline only.

When doing drama in the classroom:

- **ensure a clear work space is available for the drama activity.** If desks can not be moved in the classroom, try to use the hall or a contained outside open area.
- **talk to the students about the creation of a ‘safe space’.** In this space students don’t laugh at each other, but support and encourage (forming a circle at the beginning and end of a session or sitting with eyes closed are simple ways to focus students for a drama session)
- **incorporate a reflection session at the end of every drama activity.** This allows the students to consider what has been done and take more meaning away from the activity than it just being fun (which it will be!)
- **be firm with the students.** If a student does not follow instructions, they should be removed from the activity. This will allow the other students to see that you as the teacher are assisting in maintaining the safe space for them to work.
- **always begin every drama session with a warm-up.** This could include a focus activity, drama game or pure physical warm-up. There are good books and websites available with suggestions of warm-up activities and drama games.
- **don’t be afraid to participate in the activities yourself.** The students like to see you as the teacher taking a role in an activity. This can also allow you to help any improvisations or role plays flow and move forward more easily. (Dorothy Heathcote’s work on Mantle of the Expert and Teacher in Role discusses this in more detail).

If possible, conduct a ‘risk assessment’ with your class before embarking on any physical work. As a class it would be good to discuss the personal, group, physical, and psychological risks inherent in the working space. Together, the class could devise the measures that would help to minimize these risks. This collaboration would help the students to realise that physical work can actually be dangerous, and encourage them to take responsibility for themselves, the group, and the space in which they are working.

Monkey Baa

Fox

By Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks

Created for the stage by Monkey Baa and Siren Theatre Co.

Activities for Stage 2 and Stage 3 Students

Themes:

Love and belonging, Temptation, Risk and Betrayal, Friendship

These activities provide suggestions only and teachers are strongly encouraged to adapt or alter suggestions to suit their schools and individual classrooms. Each group of activities should be completed together, however the order of activities within the notes can be altered. Adaptation (where required) for Stage 3 students is included. These adaptations would also be appropriate as an extension to the more experience Stage 2 students.

Pre Performance

Introduction to 'Fox'

<i>Topic/Theme</i>	<i>Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Curriculum Area</i>
Introduction to 'Fox'	<p><i>If students have not read the picture book</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the title 'Fox'. Brainstorm what the play may be about. Identify the key themes: love and belonging, temptation, risk and betrayal. Compile a list of ideas to be used later for comparison post-performance. 2. Read the text with the pupils prior to attending the performance. 	Drama (Theatre) English
	<p><i>If students have read the picture book</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss with students the key elements of the story they believe would be important for including in a theatre production of the novel. 2. Consider expectations e.g. how much of the picture book could be portrayed, what special effects may be necessary etc. 	
	<p><i>For both groups</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Look at examples of play scripts with students and consider how 'Fox' may be represented as a script. Attempt to put some scene headings into order to have in mind when seeing the performance. (<i>These can be referred back to later</i>). 	
	<p><i>For both groups</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Brainstorm what the term 'Opera' refers to. 5. Teacher to encourage discussion of songs that tell stories. 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' or 'Jack and Jill' could be used as simple examples. 6. Brainstorm how different emotions could be represented via music and voice. Consider the use of volume, pitch, gentle/harsh sounds, speed and what emotions might be represented in the different combinations e.g. gentle sounds, high pitch and fast speed = happy/bright <p>NB Refer to extra notes 'Preparing Pupils for Fox' for more specific preparation suggestions relating specifically to Opera. There are activities throughout the notes which also engage in the concept of Opera and sound in performance including Exploring Personal Emotions and the Opera/Soundscape section</p>	

Introduction to Performance

<i>Topic/Theme</i>	<i>Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Curriculum Area</i>
Introduction to performance	1. Elicit from students their past experiences of theatre performances. Discuss expectations in relation to being an audience member in this style of professional performance.	Drama (Theatre)
	2. Brainstorm with students the differences between drama they would do in their classroom and the 'drama' that is viewed as theatre performance. Also consider the difference to what they think theatre performance is versus the television they may watch at home	
	3. Discuss the link between theatre and storytelling – that live theatre provides another medium for telling a story. Brainstorm other ways that stories can be told (books, radio, television, face to face etc)	
	4. Discuss specific characteristics of 'Opera' performance e.g. focus on emotion, all dialogue sung, voice used as part of the atmosphere encouraging audience engagement	

Post Performance

Evaluation & Response

<i>Topic/Theme</i>	<i>Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Curriculum Area</i>
Evaluation & Response	1. Students discuss response to the performance considering themes, issues and personal impact	Drama (Theatre) English
	2. Students to write a review of the performance with language and structure appropriate to publishing in a newspaper. It would be important to discuss the style of writing appropriate for newspapers, provide students with some examples of theatre reviews as a model for their work.	
	3. Publish the written reviews. Consider placing best reviews in the school newsletter or submitting them to the local paper. Students could also submit their reviews on the Monkey Baa website (www.monkeybaa.com.au) in the 'Your Say' section.	
Physical response to performance	1. Establish a 'safe space' where the following activities will take place. Ensure all students understand importance of respecting all interpretations by their colleagues during these activities.	Drama
	2. Conduct physical warm-up with students. (<i>Refer 'Classroom Management Strategies'</i>)	
	3. Ask students to move freely around allocated space. When teacher calls out the name of a character or event, students are to freeze in a position they feel embodies that character or event for them. NB <i>This could be depict an emotional response or a physical manifestation</i>	

Theatre Design/Technical Elements

<i>Topic/Theme</i>	<i>Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Curriculum Area</i>
Theatre Design	1. Discuss with students the set used for the performance of 'Fox'. Consider movement on the stage, sound, use of specialised equipment, lighting and props. Brainstorm a list of ideas regarding important aspects of set design e.g. Realistic space for actors to work in, appropriate design for storyline, suitable for space available.	Drama (Theatre)

	<p>2. Students to select a favourite scene/moment from the performance. They need to consider any special or unusual effects required for that scene – encouraging the students to select a ‘difficult’ scenario would make for a rich experience e.g. Moving through the forest, magpie/dog running (use of puppet and actors).</p> <p>3. Students are to design a set and write details of the technical requirements to allow the action to progress smoothly for the selected scene. (Encourage students to create their own and not reproduce the set from the production).</p> <p>3. Students could explore and name the places in the play and in the book and how they could be depicted in other ways, also maybe explore what would happen to the look and feel of the play and the setting if it was set in another country?</p>	
	<p>3. Students to make a model (using an open box as the theatre) for their designed set. Students should explain their design to the class justifying their choices and describing how they have overcome technical issues within the selected scene (this can be a small group activity or whole class).</p>	

Visual Representations

<i>Topic/Theme</i>	<i>Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Curriculum Area</i>
Visual Representations	<p>1. Students to discuss their reaction to the performance and decide on the character in which they are most interested. Discuss the use and purpose of the music and opera singer in the play. What would have happened if they were not there? How else could the story be told without singing the text of the book?</p>	Drama Visual Arts
	<p>2. Students to create an artwork representing a critical event in ‘Fox’ for their chosen character. <i>NB Students should be encouraged to plan their work (design) and use multi-media material where possible</i></p>	
	<p>3. Students to explain their artwork to the class justifying their choice of material and style <i>NB Having examples of a variety of artworks in various styles would assist students in exploring various media an techniques for their artworks</i></p>	

Opera/Soundscape

Topic/Theme	Learning Experiences	Curriculum Area
<p>Opera and Soundscape</p>	<p>1. Begin the exploration of soundscape and Opera through playing an excerpt of an Opera for students. (E.g. <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> for a gentle introduction or a more traditional Opera such as an English version of Bizet's <i>the Pearl Fisher</i> has downloadable sections at http://www.emusic.com/album/Alastair-Miles-BIZET-G-Pearl-Fisher-The-Opera-Sung-in-Eng-MP3-Download/11282312.html)</p> <p>2. Ask pupils to respond with their initial thoughts. Encourage a discussion of 'understanding' lyrics versus 'understanding' emotion. (NB If the Bizet option is used, there are a number of online versions of the traditional French Opera which could be played for pupils). Was their 'emotional' understanding different when the Opera was in English or French? With the English version, did they focus on the lyrics at all?</p> <p>3. Discuss the difference between a musical, a play and Opera. Emphasise the following points:</p> <p>a) A musical and a play involve dialogue while there is no spoken dialogue in Opera</p> <p>b) A play generally has no singing while musicals and Opera do.</p> <p>c) Opera involves continual music/singing while an Opera intersperses dialogue and song.</p> <p>3. Discus what the term 'Soundscape' might refer to. (e.g. a series of sounds/voice to tell a story or A piece of music which portrays through sound, a picture, an event, a mood or atmosphere.)</p> <p>4. Explain to students that they will be creating a soundscape based on a poem (refer to http://www.gigglepoetry.com/ for some examples of short, funny poems. The Poetry Archive (http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/studentsHome.do) is another good source). The aim is for the sounds to bring the emotion of the poem alive.</p> <p>5. Students need to work in groups to develop their soundscape. A number of steps should be followed when developing effective soundscapes.</p> <p>a) Chart the changes in emotion in the selected poem</p> <p>b) Brainstorm the varied sounds/instruments/body percussion that might demonstrate the identified emotions</p> <p>c) Consider the volume appropriate for the emotions and how the poem should be represented</p> <p>NB Students should be encouraged to be exploratory with their use of sound including body percussion and the adaptation of everyday items.</p> <p>6. Students to practice their soundscapes (aim for a maximum of 20-30 seconds long).</p> <p>7. Each group need to present their soundscape twice – first as just sounds and second with the text being chanted or sung.</p> <p>7. Encourage discussion between the two presentations of each soundscape of the emotions the students felt were represented.</p> <p>NB Each piece should be recorded (where possible) and be no more than 20-30 seconds long. Recording allows the students who performed the soundscape to be responsive to and reflective of their own work.</p>	<p>English</p> <p>Drama</p> <p>NB Music elements</p>

Character Development

Topic/Theme	Learning Experiences	Curriculum Area
<p>Character Development (Masks/Puppetry)</p>	<p>1. Discuss the use of puppets in the play. Focus should be given to the actors being used as part of the puppet and/or an extension of them. Have the students seen other different types of puppets used in other performances? E.g. Shadow, finger etc Students should consider the importance of the puppet use in Fox. What did it add to the performance? Would the characters have been as recognisable if it wasn't for the puppet use? How did the use of puppets assist or detract from the emotions and the story?</p> <p>2. Students to be allocated a character from the play (<i>important to ensure all characters are included</i>). Students are to design and make a mask or puppet that they feel represents the chosen character. Consideration should be given to choice of colour and line (mask)/construction materials (puppet) as well as decoration for each. Students to be encouraged to plan their mask/puppet as a design before constructing the original. NB Teachers to discuss the principles/rules of puppetry – most importantly consider with students the need to respect the puppets of others, not touch a puppet without permission of the owner and discuss the importance of disassociating the student from the puppet they are manipulating. For more information on puppetry teachers could visit the following websites: http://www.puppetryaustralia.info/pupaus_03/index.html (Puppetry Australia) http://www.puppetsinmelbourne.com.au/faq.php/2008/03/12/how_to_make_puppets_with_children (Puppets in Melbourne) https://www.vicscouts.asn.au/Cubs/Docs/One.pdf (How to make a sock puppet)</p>	<p>Science & Technology</p> <p>Visual Arts</p>
	<p>2. Students to physically explore the way the mask/puppet they created may move. Consideration should be given to the character and their mood. Once students are confident with their character, they should start to respond/manipulate the puppet while moving around to the other characters in which they come into contact. e.g. Fox, Magpie, Dog Stage 3 Extension: For Stage 3 students (or to extend the more experienced in Stage 2), students can be asked to recreate and perform their favourite scenes in mime using the masked characters or puppets.</p>	<p>Drama</p>
	<p>3. Students to consider a critical event in the play for the masked character/puppet they created. Students are to develop, practice and perform a character monologue discussing this event with the audience. Stage 3 Extension: Students should write the monologue down as an English activity</p>	<p>Drama</p> <p>English</p>

Characterisation – Scene recreation

<i>Topic/Theme</i>	<i>Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Curriculum Area</i>
Scene re-creation	<p><i>Students to work in small groups for this activity</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students to select a scene from the performance. 2. In small groups students to consider the scene/moment focusing on the key character relationships, plot, importance to play as whole, relationships evident within the scene and the emotions the characters exhibit. The most important aspect for students to consider is which character's perspective is being represented. <i>NB Depending on time, space and teacher intent, students could work on staging and performing their scene for the class (this is not critical to the activity, but would allow students a deeper understanding of the scene they are working with).</i> 3. Students are to consider the other characters in the scene and select one to work with. 4. In their groups, students are to re-recreate the scene from the perspective of their selected character. It will be important to focus on the relationship the newly central character has with the others in the scene – what does the altering of focus mean for the general storyline in the scene, the emphasis displayed and the existing or supposed relationships. 5. Students to be encouraged to perform or discuss their newly altered scenes and what it meant for their understanding of the character and the plot. 	English Drama
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Students should then re-create the scenes in human form rather than animal. 7. Students need to consider how they would interpret the characters and scenarios in a human world e.g. playground. What human traits/emotions do the characters demonstrate e.g. Magpie (depressed and joyous), Dog (sporty), Fox (sly outsider). Students could build on the characters using their imagination e.g. Fox (Rock and roller), Magpie (ballet dancer) etc <i>NB It is important to remind the pupils of appropriate drama boundaries (drawing on the classroom management suggestions for drama at the start of these notes is important)</i> 	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Teacher to lead a reflective discussion of how a change in perspective can alter perception of events and relationships. If time allows, reflecting on the impact this has in their own lives would be beneficial. 	

Thematic Exploration - Introduction

Topic/Theme	Learning Experiences	Curriculum Area
Thematic Exploration - Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work as the whole class (groups for Stage 3) to discuss what they view as the key themes within 'Fox'. Aim to elicit the key themes of: <i>love and belonging, temptation, risk and betrayal, friendship</i> 2. As a class record and discuss each of these themes in relation to the play (it may help to use a large sheet of paper to write brainstormed ideas on for each theme - these can be referred to later). 3. Ask students to reflect on these themes and how they may be played out in their lives and society in general today. E.g. What is friendship? How is it shown? What, if any, are the rules? What happens in the play that demonstrates friendship? 	<p>English</p> <p>Drama</p> <p>History</p>

Thematic Exploration – Exploring personal emotions

Topic/Theme	Learning Experiences	Curriculum Area
Exploring personal emotions (love and belonging, friendship)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus the discussion on the exploration of personal emotions, namely <i>love and belonging or friendship</i>. When do you they experience these in their lives? Who are the people who share in these emotions? How do they make them feel? 2. Consider how this emotion was expressed via the use of Opera. Do the students feel that the emotions would have been as obvious, as realistic if the dialogue had been spoken? 2. Allow the students to form into small groups to continue their discussion. These groups are to also select one of the emotions for the next part of the activity. 3. To engage students physically with the emotions, students should find their own space in the room and stand as one of the key characters in the play. They should then allow an emotion to affect the whole body as they move into a second pose. Explore then covering up or masking the emotion. Explore revealing the emotion with only one part of the body e.g. hands, face etc 	<p>English</p> <p>Drama</p>

	<p><i>Stage 3 Extension:</i></p> <p>4. Students to select a scene within the play that they believe encapsulates an example of their selected emotion. If necessary, reference to the section within the book that links to the scene of the play may also help to provide more detail for the students.</p> <p>5. Students are to write a detailed synopsis of the scene ensuring all characters are included. It would help for the remainder of the activity if the synopsis was well spaced on a page with each incident or ‘action’ placed on a new line. Once this is done, students should write beside the various characters the related emotions being experienced. Focus should be given to which of the characters are experiencing the key selected emotion and what other emotions work in with that. Questions to assist with student investigation could include: What other emotions are reacting with your selected one? What does this mean for the relationships between the characters? Are they the emotions you would expect from those characters?</p>	
	<p><i>NB The following activity is listed as requiring students to act out the scene in either mime or speech. If you did not feel your students would respond well to this, a discussion of the impact changing the emotions in the scene would have on the story and characters could be substituted. In addition, the students could conduct the activity without performing for their classmates, with a reflective discussion used to elicit what they discovered.</i></p> <p>6. Students are to re-create their selected scene in two different ways. Firstly, recreating the scene using the listed emotions (these are the ones expected for the storyline). Secondly, students should re-create the scene using altered emotions. As a group they should rewrite the synopsis and select which emotions should be substituted. <i>(Students should be encouraged to use their own interpretation of the scene and characters and not copy what they witnessed at the performance.)</i></p> <p><i>NB Drawing on opposing emotions can usually create interesting discussion material</i></p> <p>7. If desired, students can perform their two scenes for the class. The class should be encouraged to work out the key emotion being focused upon and how was this altered. Discussion considering the impact on the audience, impact on the characters and on the story should be encouraged.</p>	

Thematic Exploration – Risk, Betrayal and Temptation

<i>Topic/Theme</i>	<i>Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Curriculum Area</i>
Risk, Betrayal and Temptation	<p>NB <i>These topic may evoke mixed emotions in the students. It is important to create and maintain a safe and supportive environment to ensure ALL students can express and explore their own reactions on this topic.</i></p>	<p>English</p> <p>Drama</p> <p>NB Music elements</p>
	<p>1. Students to discuss the terms ‘risk’, ‘betrayal’ and ‘temptation’.</p>	
	<p>NB <i>It is important to emphasise that the group does not need to form consensus, that each member of the group may have their own perspective on what the terms refer to.</i></p>	
	<p>2. The class should compile a chart listing all the words/terms they collectively feel embodies their understanding of these three terms.</p>	
	<p><i>Stage 3 Extension:</i> This activity could be done in small groups with brainstormed words brought together into a class chart.</p>	
	<p>3. Students to select ‘risk’, ‘betrayal’ or ‘temptation’ and then select a colour they believe encapsulates that term for them. E.g. For some, ‘risk’ may be an exciting and therefore positive and important aspect of life, for others scary or sad.</p>	
	<p>4. Students are to work in their own space in the room and to explore their colour. To begin this activity, it would be beneficial to have all the students sit quietly with their eyes closed and visualise their colour and the way it might move. On a predetermined cue, students are to begin to move in their own space representing their understanding of their selected term as a colour.</p>	
	<p>5. Students are to work as a whole class (<i>Stage 3 into original groups</i>) and discuss their chosen colours and movement styles. In particular, focus should be given to how these different interpretations of the terms relate. Are they embracing and accepting? Are they fearful? Are they angry?</p>	
	<p>6. Groups are to work together to create a series of three frozen tableaux to represent their various interpretations of ‘risk’ and ‘betrayal’.</p> <p>7. Students to develop a sound scape to accompany their frozen images (<i>Stage 2 guided by teacher, Stage 3 independent</i>).</p> <p>NB See previous section below on Opera and Soundscape for development process.</p>	
<p>8. In their groups, students to ‘perform’ their frozen images (tableaux) for the class.</p> <p>9. At the conclusion of all performances, students should reflect on the differences between interpretations and what this means generally for performance.</p>		