



*A Play in a Day*  
**Deirdre Marshall**  
Teacher Resources  
2020

Ideal for Years 4-9

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## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

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This resource has been created to provide teachers with curriculum links to the Victorian Curriculum, and includes some preliminary and post show ideas and activities as to how to extend their experience of *A Play in a Day*. The activities are designed to be open-ended and multi-ability. They may need differentiation for your specific cohort.

The performances and workshops included in the Arts & Education program are designed to offer students engaging arts experiences with strong links to the Victorian Curriculum and to VEYLDF, and VCE subjects where appropriate. Each Arts & Education program varies in its purpose and content and as a result the scope for integration across the curriculum varies. Please feel free to contact the Arts & Education team on (03) 9644 1808 or at [education@rav.net.au](mailto:education@rav.net.au),

If you have any questions about this resource, its content or its implementation within your classroom please do not hesitate to contact the Arts & Education Department.

## ABOUT REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

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Regional Arts Victoria inspires art across the state. Through creative facilitation, touring, education, specialised resources, artistic projects and advocacy, we develop and sustain creative communities and artistic practice all over Victoria.

Regional Arts Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working in long-term partnerships with every level of government, fostering contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice across five decades. We advise and impact on decision-making across multiple portfolios and levels of government.

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria.

### PARTNERSHIPS

Regional Arts Victoria facilitates the partnerships, the organisations and the practices that create new work.

- Regional Cultural Partnerships
- Creative Arts Facilitators
- Membership program
- Devolved grants programs
- Resources, workshops and events
- Sector advocacy and leadership development

### PROGRAMMING

Regional Arts Victoria nurtures the experts who foster local artistic experiences and stimulate young minds.

- Arts & Education Program
- Connecting Places
- Touring programs
- Education resources
- Industry development resources and events
- Sector advocacy and leadership development

### PROJECTS

Regional Arts Victoria presents major artistic projects that build local artistic leadership and legacy.

- State-wide projects including *Small Town Transformations and Artlands Victoria*
- Internal Creative Professional Development programs
- Sector advocacy and leadership development

## ARTS & EDUCATION

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Regional Arts Victoria's Programming department has nearly 50 years of experience touring work to schools, community halls and theatres across Victoria and Australia. The department programs are the Arts & Education, Touring Services and Connecting Places programs.

The Arts and Education program also provides significant subsidy assistance (up to 75% of program costs) to eligible remote and disadvantaged schools. Your school may be eligible so please contact us to find out more.

For general enquiries please contact: [education@rav.net.au](mailto:education@rav.net.au)

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**Pippin Davies**  
Arts & Education Manager

Ph: (03) 9644 1808  
Email: [pdavies@rav.net.au](mailto:pdavies@rav.net.au)

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**Megan Collier**  
Arts & Education Coordinator

Ph: (03) 9644 1818  
Email: [mcollier@rav.net.au](mailto:mcollier@rav.net.au)

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

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A Play In A Day has been developed as an intensive immersive drama performance program consisting of four parts: an Introductory Workshop – featuring an introduction to drama through warm-up and group activities, Project Development – consisting of small and large brainstorming and planning, Rehearsal, and Performance.

The program is highly interactive and allows students and teachers to work collaboratively to develop their own unique play for performance. Depending on the school's need, this performance can be performed in-house at the end of the day's program for the rest of the school, the school community, or developed further for public performance.

A Play In a Day provides the perfect opportunity for teachers to work with a passionate and experienced teacher-artist to support the education programs within the school and build their confidence in integrating elements of the drama curriculum into their own classrooms. This program has developed out of the conversations with teachers, especially in regional primary schools, who would like to offer their students the opportunity to experience drama, to use drama skills to explore aspects of the curriculum, and to develop creativity and resilience.





### Dierdre Marshall

Dierdre Marshall is a writer, songwriter, playwright, theatre director, drama coach, music teacher, performing arts educator and an advocate for youth arts in regional Victoria. She has been running play building programs for local children and teenagers for several years and in this time has developed skills in intensive creative performance development, producing, rehearsing and performing scripted and devised works in a very short period of time. In 2018 Dierdre developed a performance for teenagers in Victoria and Canberra that was rehearsed online for 2 months before coming together to rehearse face-to-face for a total of 5 hours and performing to delegates from the UK, the US, New Zealand, Canada and Australia.



Her experience as a drama teacher led her to recognise the importance of drama and the creative process in building resilience and empathy in children as well as developing their own creativity. She now offers her skills and experience to teachers and children across the state.

## SUPPORT MATERIAL

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### Playwriting Vocabulary List

**BEAT:** a smaller section of a scene, divided where a shift in emotion or topic occurs.

**BIOGRAPHY:** a character's life story that a playwright creates.

**CHARACTER:** who the actor pretends to be. (Characters want things. They have goals and objectives.)

**CLIMAX:** the turning point in a plot.

**CONFLICT:** obstacles that get in the way of a character achieving what he or she wants. What the characters struggle against.

**DENOUEMENT:** the final resolution of the conflict in a plot.

**DIALOGUE:** a conversation between two or more characters.

**DRAMATIC ACTION:** an explanation of what the characters are trying to do.

**EXPOSITION:** the beginning part of a plot that provides important background information.

**FALLING ACTION:** the series of events following the climax of a plot.

**MONOLOGUE:** a long speech one character gives on stage.

**PLOT:** the structure of a play, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

**RISING ACTION:** the middle part of a plot, consisting of complications and discoveries that create conflict.

**SCENE:** a single situation or unit of dialogue in a play.

**SETTING:** time and place of a scene.

**STAGE DIRECTIONS:** messages from the playwright to the actors, technicians, and others in the theatre telling them what to do and how to do it.

## Drama Games

These drama games are good warm up exercises for the start of the class or a fun way to finish a session.

### 1. Wink Murder

Stand in a circle. One person plays “detective” and goes outside. When door is closed, select one person to be the murderer. When the “detective” re-enters and stands in the centre of the circle, the murderer winks at his/her victims. The victims need to die a spectacular and noisy death. The detective has three guesses at the murderer and when the murderer is discovered start the exercise again.

### 3. Budge

You need the same number of chairs as there are players – minus two. Spread the chairs out around the space, facing in all different directions. Select one person to be the chaser (“it”) and another to be the runner. Everyone else sits down on a chair. Start off with the two players a good distance apart.

The two players race between the chairs. When the runner wants to escape, he can touch the back of any chair and say “Budge!” The person on that chair has to get up and run while the previous runner sits down. Once the chaser catches their prey (by tapping them on the shoulder) then they swap roles – or two new players can be chosen.

### 4. Family Portrait

Divide the class into groups. Each group comes up one at a time and is given a title for a picture that revolves around a type of family eg. Family of Dentists, Family of Footballers, Family of Lost Librarians. You can even get more specific. “Right after grandma’s big announcement” or “The Dentists Convention” or “Footballers Lose the Premiership.” Groups have ten seconds to form a portrait based on the title. Remind the students to think about the characters involved in the picture and to talk to each other so that there are no repeat characters. They have to tell a story, even though they are frozen in place. A time limit forces students to work quickly. Count them down and at the end of 10 seconds yell out FREEZE! The end result should be a cohesive picture.

### 7. Memory Ball Game

You need a soft ball for this activity. In a circle, the teacher passes ball to someone across circle the circle, who passes the ball across the circle to someone else. Each person catches the ball once. The last student returns the ball to the teacher. The teacher throws the ball to the student they threw it to the first time. Repeat until pattern is remembered, then reverse.

### 9. Mirrors (1)

Students choose a partner up, face each other and decide who will be person 1 and person 2. Person 1 acts out combing their hair, cleaning their teeth, pulling faces, etc and person 2 is the mirror and copies the actions. Swap.

### 10. Mirrors (2)

Partner up. In two rows facing partner, Partner 1 mimes a warning about something dangerous that is approaching partner from behind. Partner 2 pretends they doesn’t understand. Partner 1 has to make actions more and more exaggerated. Partner 2 guesses. Swap roles. Share guesses with class.

## SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

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The following activities are designed for teachers and students to explore before *A Play in a Day*. They aim to give the students some context to the performance and help them better understand what they are about to watch

### Activity 1: Exercises for Developing Observation Skills-

#### Exercise One:

- Ask the students to choose someone from their daily lives who they do not know very well e.g. a neighbour or their bus driver.
- Write down observations about this person – what they look like, how they walk, stand, talk (to the greatest detail possible).
- Ask students to share their observations of this person with the class.
- Brainstorm - what would a scene involving this person be like?

#### Exercise Two:

- Overnight, assign the students to go into their bedroom and sit anywhere with a paper and pencil. Tell them to look about the room very slowly, from one end to the other, floor to ceiling, and then pick one object to write a detailed description of.  
Example: a photo frame  
Is the photograph on a table? Describe the table and the frame. Is the photo in colour? Who is in the photo? What do they look like? What are they wearing? When was the photograph taken? Why do you have this person's picture? How do you feel about this person? When was the photo given to you? Can you think of a conversation with this person? Can you describe or write a scene when you received it or when it became valuable to you?
- Write a scene about how you might feel if it were somehow lost or taken from you.
- In the next class, ask students to share their observations. After a student reads an observation aloud, the class can make suggestions about where they see a possible story developing or, if a story has already begun to evolve, where it might lead. Encourage the student to expand on this story, reinforcing the realization that most writers find stories in what is happening around them.

### Activity 2: Action Vs Activity

To begin this exercise, ask the class the difference between ACTION and ACTIVITY, two playwriting terms that are often confused.

*ACTIVITY is physical stage business (e.g. flying a kite, ironing a shirt, etc.).*

*ACTION refers to what a character does to pursue their goal (e.g. character wants to go to a dance, but she doesn't know how to dance. ACTION: she asks her sister to teach her how to dance.) ACTION is the inner motivation and objective of a character.*

- Divide the class in half. Ask each student in the first half to write down an ACTIVITY e.g. surfing, watching tv. Ask each student in the other half to write down an ACTION by deciding on a character, their goal and how they will achieve that goal. E.g. a student who wants to be a graphic designer ACTIVITY: applies for a graphic design course.
- Put the ACTIVITY suggestions into one hat and the ACTION suggestions into another. Pick one from each and have two students improvise a situation, an example of which might be:

*ACTION: A younger sister wants her older sister to “teach her how to dance.” This improvisation begins while the sisters are involved in the ACTIVITY of “Climbing Mt. Everest.”*

- After the improvisation, discuss how and why the ACTIVITY enhances the ACTION, the characters, the conflict, etc. Try a few more improvisations and continue the discussion.

### **Activity 3: Round Robin**

- Begin to tell a story and continue around the room with each person adding a few sentences, building on what has previously been said. As the story continues write on the board the key points—setting, character names, etc.
- Once everyone has been given a chance to contribute, ask each student to continue the story on their own on a piece of paper, build to a climax, and resolve the conflict. Allow only 10-15 minutes for this writing exercise. Ask each student to share their ideas at the end.

This exercise helps students to think in terms of creating a beginning, middle, and end as well as developing skills for listening and building upon previous events. Individual imaginations will create surprising results from the initial shared data.

### **Activity 4: Secrets**

Some of the greatest plays are centered on a character with a secret. This activity allows students to explore this idea.

- Ask students to close their eyes and think of something about themselves that they wouldn't want anyone else to know. (Make it clear at the beginning that this is for them and they will not be asked to reveal this secret to anyone.)
- Ask them to imagine if someone found out this secret. What would the scene look like? What would happen? How would you feel?

To illustrate the dramatic impact of a secret, ask students to try one or more of the following improvisations:

- a.) Character X has a secret that affects Character Y but doesn't tell Y this.
- b.) Character X discovers a secret that Character Y has been keeping, but doesn't confront Y.
- c.) Character X confronts Character Y about the secret in either a or b.

These exercises encourage students to create characters whose secrets make them complex and multi-dimensional. Part of the enjoyment of watching plays is discovering the particular truth explored in the world of each play.

## Activity 5: The Story of a Journey

This exercise combines improvisations with linear dramatic structure.

- Divide the class into five groups. Each of these groups will work to create their own part of a story using the following tasks:

**Group 1:** Come up with 4-5 characters. They have to be related to each other in some way (e.g. family members, co-workers, friends), but they can be any age, size, shape, ethnicity, etc. Encourage Group 1 to be as clear and detailed about their characters as they can.

**Groups 2, 3, and 4:** Come up with a setting for a scene and give it as much detail as possible. There can be additional characters in each group's setting (e.g. hunters in a jungle, server in a diner).

**Group 5:** Come up with a setting for a scene then develop a reason why a group of characters might want to arrive there. E.g. If their setting is Grandma's house, the reason for going there could be to celebrate her birthday at a surprise party.

*All groups need to work independently, so no one knows who the characters are (apart from Group 1) or where the other groups are going to place them.*

- Ask each group to share the results of their tasks with the rest of the class. They now have the foundation of a story; a journey that can be scripted into play form. The characters created by Group 1 have a destination and a reason for getting there, created by Group 5. In order to accomplish the goal of arriving there, they must travel through the settings created by Groups 2, 3, and 4, settings that may well have other characters with whom they must interact.
- The entire class can then outline the play and begin to plan the dialogue. Each scene can then be improvised with the students playing the various parts.

The play that results can be very strange and wildly funny. The students will also gain a better understanding of character development, story progress and the relationship between characters' objectives, obstacles, and conflicts.

## SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES:

Activities that dissect and expand upon the content of the workshop that the teacher and students can engage in post-visit.

### Activity 1: Questions for the Playwright- Class Discussion and Analysis

Discuss these questions about the play they created with the class:

- What did you like about your piece?
- What is the major conflict? How strong is it?
- Did anything confuse you about your play?
- What is the most important image or moment to you in the piece?
- Did your characters all sound the same or like different people with distinct voices?
- What did each character want?
- Which sections made you cringe?
- Were there elements of the piece that surprised you?
- Can you explain what the play is about in one or two sentences? (The clearer you are, the clearer it will be in the play.)
- Is there anything you'd like to see more of? (A more developed relationship? More specific behaviour from a character? Stronger needs?)
- Were there any loose ends? (Is something introduced in the play that kind of drifts away?)

### Activity 2: Rewriting

Rewriting is one of the most difficult and essential parts of playwriting. It is so hard for a writer to revise, regardless of age or experience. For many younger students, the act of rewriting is a new experience. The idea of the first draft as exactly that—a “draft” to cover with lines, arrows, cross-outs, and new ideas—can be liberating. Once a student experiences the benefits of an interactive revision process, they understand that revision is about possibilities, not mistakes. In asking the young writer to rewrite, you will often have to help them understand that scenes will be strengthened by multiple visits and extra work. Discuss the following checklist with the class:

Checklist for Successful Rewriting:

- ✓ Have I written all the scenes the audience needs to see and hear? Do I need any scenes before or after to develop character and conflict?
- ✓ Is the play focused on the main character and conflict? How can I focus it?
- ✓ Are conflict and character developed through the dialogue?
- ✓ Have I expressed as much as possible through the dialogue, avoiding narration?
- ✓ Have I provided settings? Do the settings contribute to the action?
- ✓ Is my work divided into scenes where appropriate?
- ✓ Does the audience get to know the characters well enough to care about them?
- ✓ Are my characters different from each other? Do they speak in characteristic ways? (Speech patterns, style, attitudes, tone, etc.)
- ✓ Are there any characters I should eliminate because they aren't really necessary?
- ✓ Are my characters well developed? Do I know them as well as I should? Have I revealed as much as I need to about them? How can I develop them further?
- ✓ Do I know what my characters want? Will the audience know? Are their goals clear?
- ✓ Have I thrown interesting and challenging obstacles into my characters' paths?
- ✓ Is the central conflict or struggle of my play an interesting one?
- ✓ Do the characters change? How can I put them through a believable change?
- ✓ Have I avoided resolving the conflict too soon?
- ✓ Is the audience always curious to know what happens next?
- ✓ What does happen next? Could I write that scene, too?

### Activity 3: Follow Up Performance

The Participants put on a second performance of their play, taking in to consideration the points and re-writes discussed in Activities 1 & 2.

### Activity 4: Reactive Writing

Ask students to write an article about the performance for the school newsletter.

### CURRICULUM LINKS – Victorian F-10 Curriculum

Learning Areas	Capabilities
<p><b>The Arts – Drama</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Explore and Express Ideas</b></p> <p>Explore dramatic action, empathy and space in improvisations, play-building and scripted drama, to develop characters and situations</p> <p><b>Strand: Drama Practices</b></p> <p>Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood and atmosphere and focus dramatic action.</p> <p><b>Strand: Present and Perform</b></p> <p>Perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative and uses performance styles and design elements to engage an audience.</p> <p><b>Strand: Respond and Interpret</b></p> <p>Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including in the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p><b>Achievement Standard</b></p> <p>By the end of Level 6, students explain how dramatic action and meaning is communicated in drama they make, perform and view. They explain how drama from different cultures, times and places influences their own drama making.</p>	<p><b>Critical and Creative Thinking</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Questions and Possibilities</b></p> <p>Investigate different techniques to sort facts and extend known ideas to generate novel and imaginative ideas.</p> <p><b>Strand: Meta-Cognition</b></p> <p>Investigate thinking processes using visual models and language strategies. Examine learning strategies, including constructing analogies, visualising ideas, summarising and paraphrasing information and reflect on the application of these strategies in different situations.</p> <p><b>Achievement Standard</b></p> <p>By the end of Level 6, students apply questioning as a tool to focus or expand thinking. They use appropriate techniques to copy, borrow and compare aspects of existing solutions in order to identify relationships and apply these to new situations.</p> <p>Students represent thinking processes using visual models and language. They practice and apply learning strategies, including constructing analogies, visualising ideas, summarising and paraphrasing information. Students disaggregate ideas and problems into smaller elements or ideas, develop criteria to assess and test thinking, and identify and seek out new relevant information as required.</p>

## English

### Strand: Text structure and organisation

Understand that cohesive links can be made in texts by omitting or replacing words.

Understand the uses of commas to separate clauses.

### Strand: Expressing and developing ideas

Investigate how complex sentences can be used in a variety of ways to elaborate, extend and explain ideas.

Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs, elaborated tenses and a range of adverb groups/phrases.

Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion.

### Strand: Phonetics and word knowledge

Understand how to use phonic knowledge and accumulated understandings about blending, letter-sound relationships, common and uncommon letter patterns and phonic generalisations to recognise and write increasingly complex words.

Understand how to use banks of known words, word origins, base words, prefixes, suffixes, spelling patterns and generalisations to spell new words, including technical words and words adopted from other languages.

### Achievement Standard

By the end of Level 6, Students understand how language features and language patterns can be used for emphasis. They show how specific details can be used to support a point of view. They explain how their choices of language features and images are used. They use banks of known words and the less familiar words they encounter to create detailed texts elaborating upon key ideas for a range

## Personal and Social

### Strand: Self-Awareness and Management

Extend their vocabulary through which to recognise and describe emotions and when, how and with whom it is appropriate to share emotions. Explain how being prepared to try new things can help identify strategies when faced with unfamiliar or challenging situations.

### Strand: Collaboration

Use basic skills required for participation in group tasks and respond to simple questions about their contribution to group tasks. Recognise that conflict occurs and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate ways to deal with conflict.

### Achievement Standard

By the end of Level 2, students show an awareness of the feelings and needs of others. They identify and describe personal interests, skills and achievements and reflect on how these might contribute to school or family life. They recognise the importance of persisting when faced with new and challenging tasks. Students demonstrate ways to interact with and care for others. They describe their contribution to group tasks. They practise solving simple problems, recognising there are many ways to resolve conflict.

<p>of purposes and audiences. They demonstrate understanding of grammar and make considered choices from an expanding vocabulary to enhance cohesion and structure in their writing. They also use accurate spelling and punctuation for clarity, provide feedback on the work of their peers and can make and explain editorial choices based on agreed criteria.</p>	
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The following worksheets will be useful during the planning activities in your session.

**Building a Character**

1. Give your character a name, age, and physical description.

2. Where does your character live?

3. What does your character like to do?

4. Name one thing that would make your character angry.

5. Describe a typical day for your character.

6. Describe a dream your character has had.

7. Pretend your character has a secret. Why is it a secret?

8. What is your character's goal?

## Conflict Scheme

List the characters' names, their goals, and the obstacles in their way. Be specific and concise.

	CHARACTER	GOAL	OBSTACLES
1			
2			
3			
4			

Contact the Arts & Education team at [education@rav.net.au](mailto:education@rav.net.au) with further questions or, even better, examples of your work!

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