

The Martin-Lysicrates Prize

Stage 4 English



The
Lysicrates
Foundation



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Lesson 1: Modern themes in ancient plays	1
Lesson 2: Create your own Dithyramb!	4
Lesson 3: Heroes and their flaws: Creating a tragic character	6
Lesson 4: Standing on the Shoulders: James Martin	8
Lesson 5: The Chorus!	12
Lesson 6: Exploring Hitler's Daughter - Issues for our times	14
Lesson 8: Democracy in action - the 'pitch'	16
Lesson 9: How will we judge? Introducing the Lysicrates Competition	18
Lesson 11: Review and Reflection	21



Lesson 1: Modern themes in ancient plays

Drama is not a very new form. In fact, the first playscripts were written over two and a half thousand years ago in Classical Greece and performed outside to large audiences at drama competitions which were held over a few days. The festivals were free to attend and plays would be sponsored by different patrons (choregoi) who gave money to help pay for the event. 17,000 spectators would fill the outdoor theatre, situated in a spectacular position just under the Acropolis.

They would loudly cheer, boo, cry and laugh. They were the judges. With their acclamation, they effectively selected the winner of the competition. Selection by the audience instead of by an expert panel or a single judge, and free entry for everybody, were outward expressions of the idea, and ideal, of democracy that was first introduced in classical Greece. (In Greek, *demos* means people, and

kratos means power). Rich and poor came to the theatre, and the event was an opportunity for them to bond and consider themselves to be Athenians, whatever their social status.

Successful sponsors at the competition would erect monuments to commemorate the winning plays and dithyrambs (poetic songs performed by a chorus). Only one of these monuments remains – commemorating a victory sponsored by a choregos named Lysicrates. A replica of this monument stands in the Sydney Botanical Gardens today – evidence of the legacy left to our culture by the Ancient Greeks.

Only a few playscripts from this period of drama have survived. They have been passed down the generations because the themes and ideas in the plays still speak to us.

In this series of lessons you will:

1. Perform an extract from an Ancient Greek drama
 2. Write a modern dithyramb
 3. Create a character for a play
 4. Compose stage directions for a play
 5. The chorus
 6. Drama to explore issues of our times
 7. Practice drama activities for play-building
 8. Develop a plot synopsis to pitch for financial support of a play
 9. Develop criteria for judgement of a short film using a Tropfest winner as an example
 10. Watch plays and vote
 11. Write a review and reflection of the plays in the Martin-Lysicrates competition.
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Antigone: modern themes in an ancient play

- the individual's conscience against the state's authority
- the importance of family ties versus larger ideas and ideals

The script you are about to read tells the story of Antigone and Ismene, who are sisters. Their brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, have recently been killed on the battlefield in the civil war (a war between the citizens of one state), in which Creon, now the new king, was finally victorious. However, these brothers fought on opposing sides and

Creon has decided that Eteocles, who fought with him, will be given a proper burial, but Polyneices (who was the King's enemy) will be left alone where he died for the birds to eat. This was considered to be the greatest shame in Ancient Greece, and it was the duty of each family to bury and mourn their dead.

An excerpt from the play **Antigone** (written by Sophocles in c.442BCE, translated by George Theodoridis in 2004). Accessed at: <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Antigone.php>

Ismene Antigone, what is it? I can feel something horrible, something frightening in your words.

Antigone The burial of our brothers, Ismene!

Creon has decreed that the one may be buried with all honours while the other is not to be buried at all but, instead, he is to be shamed!

They say Creon has buried Eteocles with all proper burial rites and ceremonies fully preparing him for the world below, while our other brother, Polyneices, who died a death just as horrible, should be left unburied and unmourned! Left alone, to be the food for the sky's starving ravens, all those birds of prey that eagerly hunt out their food.

These are the laws our Lord Creon has decreed for us two, Ismene! For you, Ismene and for me. Yes, even for me! *(She looks around her anxiously)*

They say he's about to come out of the palace any minute now to make this declaration again, loud and clear, in case there is anyone who hasn't heard it yet.

And he is not taking this declaration lightly, either! Because if someone dares to disobey it, he'll have death by public stoning to look forward to!

So, that's how things stand at the moment my dear sister, Ismene, and you, now you must show the true worth of your birth: are you worthy of it, Ismene, or will you shame your house, Ismene, the house of Oedipus, our father?

Ismene But, Antigone, if things have come this far what can I do? How could I possibly help?

Antigone We can think and act together.

Ismene How? And do what exactly?

Antigone, what are you up to? What awful, what dangerous thing have you got in mind now?

Antigone *(Extends her right hand to Ismene)* Ismene, help this hand to lift our brother's corpse!

Ismene *(Horried)* Oh! No!

Antigone, are you thinking of burying Polyneices? It is against the will of our country, the will of our King, Antigone!

Antigone He is our brother, Ismene! Yours and mine! And if you won't help me then they won't be blaming me for having betrayed him!

Ismene Ah, you poor, poor woman, Antigone! Are you really going to bury our brother against the King's wishes?

Antigone Creon has no right at all to separate me from my own brother. None whatsoever!

Drama Activity

In pairs, read through this script aloud and consider:

- where the scene is set
- how this might look
- what objects/props might be present on the stage
- how the characters would move on stage

Rehearse the scene to see how it would work and consider:

- how you needed to move around the furniture
- whether you were able to include enough action in the scene or whether you both stood still for much of the time
- how you made the script come alive
- what improvements you could make to your production

Consider also the ancient (and still very modern) themes of this play –

Are individuals entitled to follow their own conscience against the power and authority of the state?

Are family ties more important than broader considerations like morality and tradition?

Lesson 1 Images



The Lysicrates monument replica, located in the Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney, NSW



Restoration of the monument in Sydney



Restoration of the monument in Sydney



A new section of the frieze is delicately hoisted into position on the Lysicrates Monument in Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden.



The monument of Lysicrates as it currently stands in the Athenian Plaka, to the east of the Acropolis.

Lesson 2: Create your own Dithyramb!

Ancient Greek theatre included poetry as well as dialogue. The poetry that was performed was called a dithyramb, an ancient form of poetry that sometimes retold legends in imaginative ways. Generally, dithyramps were concerned with commemorating the life of Dionysus, the Greek God of theatre and wine. They were performed by a large chorus of voices and may have originally involved dancing. Wild, emotional and ecstatic, dithyramps were dramatic and engaging. According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle, tragic plays developed from the dithyramb.

Dithyramps were a form of poetry, performed for an audience. They didn't rhyme. They told stories, myths and legends that were a well-known and well-loved part of contemporary culture. They spoke directly to their audiences, dramatically and passionately.

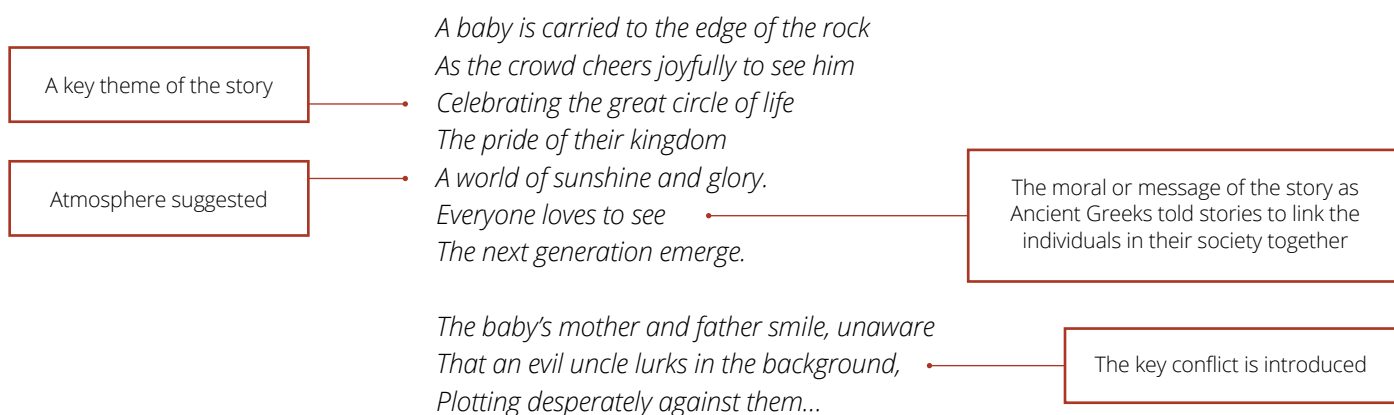
In summary, a dithyramb is a poem

- without rhyme
- telling a story
- performed by a chorus
- possibly including dance

What would a dithyramb look like in the modern world?

Modern performance poetry has much in common with ancient dithyramps. Dithyramps were a form of poetry, performed for an audience. They didn't rhyme. They told stories, myths and legends that were a well-known and well-loved part of contemporary culture. They spoke directly to their audiences, dramatically and passionately.

A modern dithyramb retelling the story of **The Lion King** might begin this way:



Star Wars is another modern story that has many mythical elements we could convey in a dithyramb:



These two examples show how the images from popular stories can be used to create blank verse (poetic texts that do not use rhyme to communicate their message).

Read through these as a class, first in a neutral tone of voice, and then in a more dramatic tone. (You may wish to pretend you are reading the voice-over in a film trailer!)

After you have read these examples, feel free to try writing your own poem retelling a story that is important to you. You can also record a reading/performance of your poem.

Writing and drama activity

1. In small groups, choose a story that is important to you. It may be a fairytale, a legend from your culture or a particular novel or film that you have enjoyed.
2. In the table below, list the points of the story that you find most interesting. You may wish to focus on the characters of the hero, the values and beliefs that are shown in the story, the main events and the sources of conflict within the story. These will provide you with useful ideas for your poem.
3. List at least three images from the story that you find particularly memorable.

Ideas for my poem

Points in the story	Three images from the story
<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••••	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.

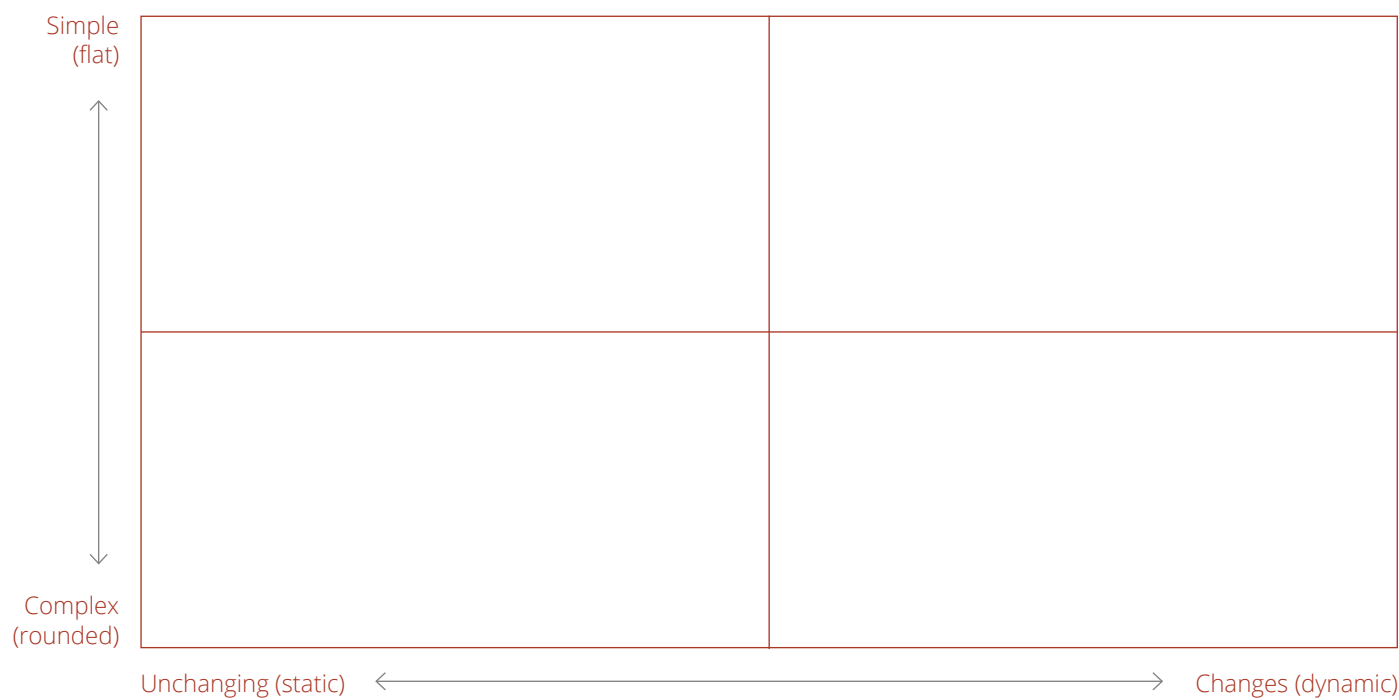
4. Now you are ready to begin to transform the plot of the story into your own poem. You should be able to tell the story within 15-30 lines. You should aim to include a reference to the moral or message of the story towards the end – the Ancient Greeks told stories to link the individuals in their society together, to explore common values and to question attitudes and ideas.
5. Perform your poem aloud to the class.

Lesson 3: Heroes and their flaws: Creating a tragic character

Characters are either simple characters (or one-dimensional) or complex characters (multi-dimensional). This means that some characters have only one dominant characteristic or attribute (perhaps they are kind, or polite, or aggressive). Simple characters do not develop or change significantly throughout the story and are generally minor characters. However, a complex character has many different aspects to their personality – perhaps they are rude to humans, but have a soft spot for animals. They may be very kind, but quite naïve. Complex characters often go on a journey and grow and change as a result of this journey.

Examples of complex characters might include: a kind and selfless charity worker who is obsessed with looking glamorous on social media, a hardened criminal who secretly takes care of stray cats, an elderly person with a youthful hobby, a CEO of a company who secretly wants to make a sea change, or a highly introverted performer. All these characters have a surprising trait which gives them some complexity.

Review some of the characters you have met in stories and place them in the box according to how complex and how dynamic they are.



Traditionally, the tragic hero begins a play in a state of prosperity. Generally, the character is well-liked, has many good things going for them, and may be wealthy and successful. This leads them to show a great deal of pride (hubris) in their situation. There may be some warning that the hero is going to fail or be undermined, but the hero generally ignores this warning and experiences a tragic downfall (nemesis).

Shakespeare's tragic hero

The greatest dramatist in the English language, if not in the world is William Shakespeare. Shakespeare's Othello is an interesting example of a tragic hero. We hear a great deal about Othello from the other characters before we see him on the stage.

- He is a black African man living in Venice in Italy, where he has achieved fame and power as a general in the Army. This is a high position and he controls many people.
 - He has a beautiful new wife, Desdemona. His wife is white and much younger than he.
 - We learn from the other characters that Othello has "his own pride and purposes" (Act I, Scene i, line 13).
 - Othello is descended from a royal line and is proud of his noble heritage.
 - He boasts about being useful to the city of Venice due to his abilities as a soldier. The Duke of Venice tells him that he is needed to fight in a war almost as soon as he sees him – proof that Othello is valued in his career.
 - He has proudly told his wife stories of "the dangers I had passed" (Act 1, Scene iii, line 193). His ability to retell tales of his bravery has made him appealing and attractive to her.
-

However, Othello has a fatal flaw (hamartia), which is a weakness that will cause his downfall. Despite being a proud man, he is also easily jealous. Others are able to use this against him.

- What are the reasons for Othello's pride? What could make Othello jealous? Share your ideas.
- Where would Othello sit in the box above?

Drama Activity

Why does having a particular character weakness make an individual more human and interesting? Is anyone entirely good or bad?

With a partner, develop a dialogue where a character's weakness is evident in what the character says or what the character does. Your character may even want to discuss this weakness with an understanding friend or counsellor. Once you have worked out the situation, write down the dialogue.

Lesson 4: Standing on the Shoulders: James Martin

Consider the following lyrics from the song 'Standing on the Shoulders', by Joyce Johnson Rowse (recordings of the song can be found on YouTube):

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me

I am stronger for their courage, I am wiser for their words

I am lifted by their longing for a fair and brighter future

I am grateful for their vision, for their toiling on this Earth

Discussion Questions

- What does the song tell you about the debt we have to the people who have gone before us? What do we have to be grateful for?
- Why should we care about the legacies that have been left for us by the people of the past? Are our ancestors the only people we should be "grateful for", or is the song about something else?
- What is one thing we take for granted today that has come about only because of the efforts and struggles of past generations?

The Martin-Lysicrates Prize for plays written for children commemorates two people: Lysicrates, an arts patron in Ancient Greece who erected a monument to commemorate his victory in a theatre competition; and James Martin, an early Premier of NSW whose love of learning empowered him to overcome poverty and discrimination, and whose thinking was especially shaped by the lessons he learned at school about art and politics in Ancient Greece. The Lysicrates Foundation's website (www.lysicratesfoundation.org.au) contains details about both remarkable men.

We're studying James Martin because he commissioned Australia's copy of the ancient Lysicrates Monument and put it in his own garden in Potts Point. Today that copy, in golden sandstone, stands in a beautiful spot by the harbour in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens.

The Martin-Lysicrates Prize is a recreation of the Great Dionysia, the ancient Greek play festival where it was the audience that effectively chose the winner. Years 7 and 8 in New South Wales are now doing the same thing. We think this is the first time in 2500 years that this way of choosing the winner has been adopted. So years 7 and 8 in New South Wales are pioneers.

Stage directions: a Martin-Lysicrates finalist

Stage directions are an important element of a play script as they contain instructions for the director and, sometimes the actors, for how to bring the play to life on stage.

In small groups, read the extract from *The Zookeeper's Daughter* by Verity Laughton (located on the next page) and at the same time act out the stage directions.

Discussion

Why may stage directions be necessary?
In what ways can they:

- Help bring the characters and setting to life
- Be used as a guide for staging productions of a play?

The Zoo Keeper's Daughter

Zed - a primary age girl, the Zoo Keeper's Daughter

Zac - a beggar boy, her eventual friend

Dad - Zed's father, Zoo Keeper for the Fabulous Beasts

PROLOGUE

A UNICORN weaves its way through a mysterious landscape. It's exotic, fabulous, beautiful.

It vanishes into a threatening forest.

Scene 1

A seaside town. The initial vista is flat with One Tall Tree. The sea in the distance.

On the flat area, a motley collection of caravans, tents and cage. Perhaps a sign saying 'Last Show tomorrow! Last chance to see The Fabulous Beasts!' It is late afternoon. The sun is slowly sinking in the West.

A BEGGAR BOY (Zac is scooting through the general area, looking in garbage cans, anywhere, everywhere for some food, He may go near some of the cages, only to backtrack pretty quickly. Whatever is in them is majorly scary.

He finds nothing to eat. He's starving.

VOICES: (off)

Zac hides

Enter Dad, (the ZOO-KEEPER) and Zed, his daughter. They may be unconventional outsiders in terms of the 'normal' world, but clearly they're a pretty tight team within themselves.

Zac watches

Dad Check the Griffins.

Zed (*Peers forensically into a cage*). Check, Griffins. (*To Griffins*) Good girl! Cutie! Good boy!

Dad Check the Minotaur.

Zed He hasn't eaten his brussel sprouts.

Dad Bad minotaur! Bad boy! (*A furious howl from the minotaur*).

Zed Dad. He likes meat.

Dad BRUSSEL SPROUTS!

(*A furious howl from the minotaur*)

Zed (beat) Chuck him a sausage?

(*An appreciative roar from the minotaur*).

Dad (*To Minotaur*) Eat your sprouts! (*To Zed*) Tough Love, Zed!

Zed (*Runs the length of the cages as she speaks, naming the occupants as she goes*). Griffin! Minotaur! Pegasus! Barnacle Goose! Dragon! Werewolf! –

(*Even Zed doesn't much like the werewolf and away in his hiding place the boy shudders*).

– And the Uni –

(*She stops at an empty cage. No unicorn*).

Dad (*Sobs*) Stupid, faithless, runaway!

Writing stage directions

This exercise involves a BLANK SCRIPT – a script that does not contain stage directions. It looks at the early life of James Martin and his determination to complete his education. Martin is one of the individuals on whose ‘shoulders’ we are ‘standing’.

James Martin (1820 – 1886) made a huge contribution to NSW as three-times Premier and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, despite very humble beginnings. He introduced many education programs for the illiterate kids that were roaming the streets of early Sydney; and with Henry Parkes, he started what has become the Department of Education. Martin Place is named after him in recognition of his determined character and his many contributions to Australia.

In groups of 3 or 4, read through the script and and rehearse it to experiment with different ways of

- Selecting and arranging the set
- Using props and
- The characters

It begins with James Martin’s parents narrating their story to the audience, and includes a brief moment where James comes on stage.

This article (<https://bit.ly/2A4fXk5>) has a picture of the statue of James Martin to help you visualise how he would have looked as he walked to school.

Describe the setting. What props are on the stage to represent the Martin family? Include details about James’s parents, Mary and John Martin. You may need to invent some details or use your assumptions about the 1800s to consider how you would show this era on stage.

Mary He was a year and a half old when I stepped off the boat from Ireland with him. He could barely walk, but he was so curious about the world even then. That was in 1821, and we didn’t know what the land we had moved to could offer him.

What is on the stage to represent the absent James? An image? A piece of clothing? Describe how the character of James is shown.

John James was very clever from the beginning. But there were still things we could teach him. He saw the way that people treated us. We were migrants, we had no money, no one respected people like us -

Mary (Interrupts) Hard work for little gain, that was all we knew. We lived in the servants’ quarters at Government House in Parramatta. My husband was a groom in the stables there. We wanted better for our son and James wanted more for himself.

John To get anywhere, he needed to go to school in the city. There was so little around Parramatta – by the time James was twelve, there was nothing more that a school in the area could teach him. I looked for work in town, but had no luck.

A young James enters. Describe his costume and appearance.

James Use an adverb to describe his tone. Don’t worry, Dad. I’ll go anyway.

John It’s thirteen miles away, James. Of course your mother and I want you to have more book-learning than we do. But there’s no way of getting there.

James I’ll walk. Every day. I’ll either find the road, or make it.

Mary Do you really want to go so much? It’s very far away.

James I’m going. Even if I have to hitch rides every day or walk home in the dark, I’ll still get there.

(James exits the stage). Describe where Mary and John stand after their son has exited.

Mary (To the audience.) He was so determined even then.

Share some of your stage directions with the class and discuss:

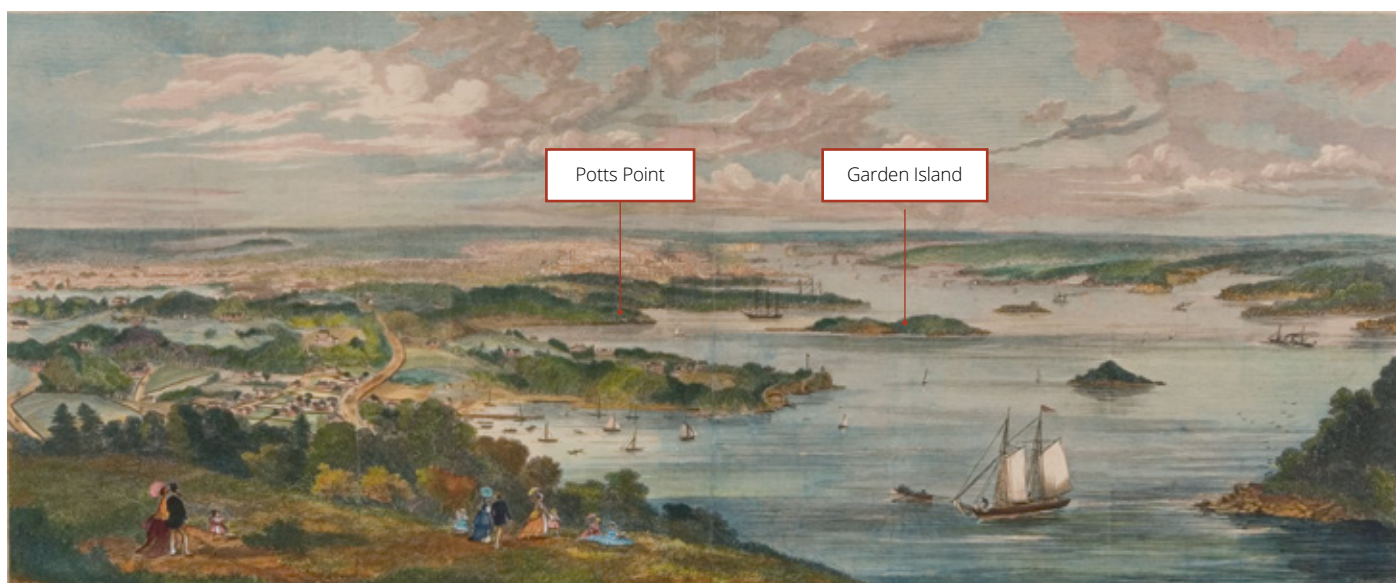
- Which looked the most interesting for the audience? Why?

Lesson 4 Images



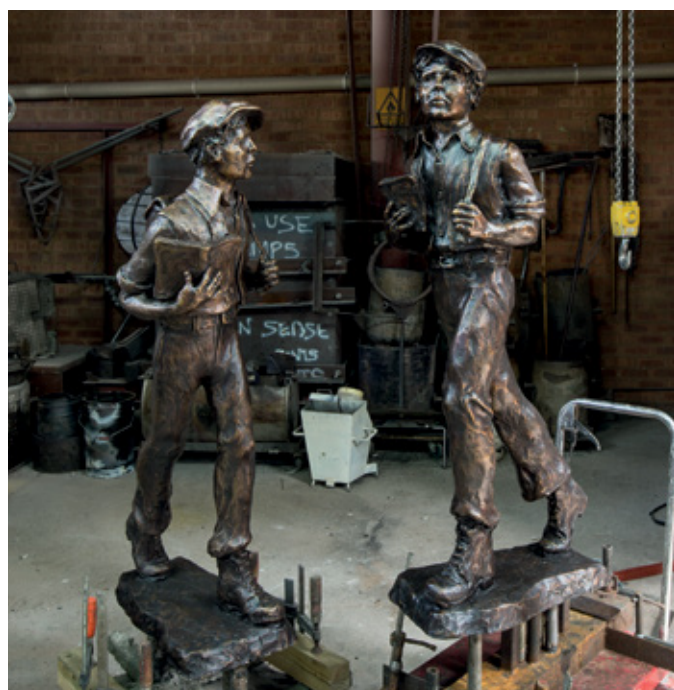
Government House, Parramatta, 1838.

Charles Rodius 1802–1860. State Library of New South Wales, [SSV*/Sp Coll/Rodius/17]. Painted when the Martin family were no longer there (when James was 17 or 18). The servants' quarters (where the Martins lived), kitchen and scullery (South Pavilion) are to the immediate left of the main building, while the Governor's quarters (North Pavilion) are to its right (on the river side, in the picture mostly obscured by bushes with only the roof visible).



Engraving of Sydney Harbour in 1871

Statues of James Martin walking to school as a child (right). Accompanied by the bronze plaques on the four sides of the trachyte base of each statue (below).



Lesson 5: The Chorus!

You may be familiar with films or plays that involve a Chorus. Commonly seen in musicals, the Chorus is a group of actors or singers who perform together.

In Greek theatre, the Chorus might:

- Talk to the main characters and try to persuade them to make particular decisions
- Express sympathy for the situations that characters find themselves in
- Sing and dance
- Narrate the action
- Become the voice of society, expressing opinions about the events in the play and judging the characters

In the film *Bran Nue Dae* (2009), an Indigenous Australian boy (Willie) is sent to boarding school in Perth. After being caught stealing from the kitchen, he is punished by one of the priests at the school. Willie decides to escape the school and return to his home in Broome, a place where he belongs and feels valued. A Chorus of students join Willie in his parting song to the school (titled "There's Nothing I Would Rather Be") and express their positive sense of identity in a society that has chosen to "take my precious land away".

1. What do you see the Chorus of schoolboys doing in this excerpt? How do the words of the song and their actions demonstrate their sense of identity as a group?
2. How are the Chorus shown to be powerful through their gestures and words here?
3. There were generally 24 performers in a Greek Chorus – a similar number to the scene you have just watched. How would this have affected the way the stage space was used?
4. How do you think a Chorus can be useful in a play? (Keep in mind that we are talking about the live performance of a script on a stage.)

Writing a choral speech

You are going to write your OWN choral speeches.

In your scene, the Chorus will be giving advice to the main character in a play. The character could be

- from popular culture
- a character from a well-known story
- a character from a novel you have read.

Imagine the character standing centre stage questioning whether to make one of the decisions in his or her story.

The chorus then delivers its advice in a speech lasting 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Here are two examples of the speeches that choruses made in Greek drama. The first one is a dithyramb.

Examples of Dithyrambs and Utterances by the Chorus

1. A famous dithyramb spoken by the Chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone*. This dithyramb celebrates human ingenuity. The sentiments it expresses were exactly felt by me (one of the co-founders of the Lysicrates Foundation) when I watched the first moon landing.

There are many strange and wonderful things,
but nothing more strangely wonderful than man.
He moves across the white-capped ocean seas
blasted by winter storms, carving his way
under the surging waves that engulf him.
With his teams of horses he wears down
the unwearied and immortal earth,
the oldest of the gods, harassing her,
as year by year his ploughs move back and forth.

He snares the light-winged flocks of birds,
herds of wild beasts, creatures from deep seas,
trapped in the fine mesh of his hunting nets.
O resourceful man, whose skill can overcome
ferocious beasts roaming mountain heights.
He curbs the rough-haired horses with his bit
and tames the inexhaustible mountain bulls,
setting their savage necks beneath his yoke.

He's taught himself speech and wind-swift thought,
trained his feelings for communal civic life,
learning to escape the icy shafts of frost,
volleys of pelting rain in winter storms,
the harsh life lived under the open sky.
That's man—so resourceful in all he does.
There's no event his skill cannot confront—
other than death—that alone he cannot shun,
although for many baffling sicknesses
he has discovered his own remedies.

The qualities of his inventive skills
bring arts beyond his dreams and lead him on,
sometimes to evil and sometimes to good.
If he treats his country's laws with due respect
and honours justice by swearing on the gods,
he wins high honours in his city.

But when he grows bold and turns to evil,
then he has no city. A man like that—
let him not share my home or know my mind.

2. An ode which features a dialogue between a chorus and the chorus leader about Theseus approaching Athens. It is by a writer named Bacchylidis:

Chorus:

King of sacred Athens, lord of the luxury-loving Ionians,
why did the trumpet send out a call to arms from its
bronze bell just now?

Is there some enemy on our border, leading an army?
Or are robbers plotting to steal our flocks of sheep?
What is it that tears your heart? Speak!

Aegeus:

*Just now a herald arrived, having come by foot on the long
road from the Isthmus. He tells of the incredible deeds of a
mighty man. That man killed overweening*

*Sinis, who was the greatest of mortals in strength; he is the
son of Lytaeus the Earthshaker, son of Cronus. He killed
the deadly boar in the valleys of Cremmyon, and reckless
Sciron. He closed the wrestling school of Cercyon; Procoptes
met a better man and dropped the powerful hammer of
Polypemon. I dread how this will end.*

Chorus:

Who is he supposed to be? Where is he from? How is he
equipped? Is he leading a great army with weapons of war?
Or does he come alone with only his attendants, like a
traveller wandering among foreign people, this man who is
so strong, valiant, and bold, who has overcome the power
of such great men? Indeed a god must be driving him, so
that he can bring justice down on the unjust; for it is not
easy to accomplish deed after deed and not meet with
evil. In the long course of time all things come to an end.

Aegeus:

*The herald says that only two men accompany him, and
that he has a sword slung over his bright shoulders and
two polished javelins in his hands, and on his fiery-red hair
he wears a well-made Laconian hat. A purple tunic and a
woolen Thessalian cloak cover his chest. Bright red Lemnian
fire flashes from his eyes. He is a boy in the prime of youth,
intent on the playthings of Ares: war and battles of clashing
bronze. He is on his way to splendour-loving Athens.*

Lesson 6: Exploring Hitler's Daughter - Issues for our times

The play *Hitler's Daughter*, dramatised by Eva di Cesare from the novel by Jackie French, asks many questions about the way we think and whether individuals are responsible for the actions of society. It explores Adolf Hitler's persecution of the Jewish people during World War II and creates an imagined situation. If Hitler had a daughter, what would she have been brought up to think?

The following excerpt is from Scene 4 of the theatrical adaptation of the novel. Mark, a school student, has been listening to a story from a friend about Hitler's daughter. He has started to think about the issues in the story and wants to ask his teacher some questions:

-
- Mark** I just wanted to know... I mean, it's dumb, but I was thinking, do kids have to be like their parents?
- Mr McDonald** I'm not sure I get your meaning.
- Mark** Well, say someone's father did something really evil. Would their kids be evil too?
- Mr McDonald** No, they probably wouldn't be evil too.
- Mark** But, we're like our parents, aren't we?
- Mr McDonald** Yes and no, you inherit your talents from your parents, but what you do with them is your choice.
- Mark** So... so Hitler's kids, for example. They wouldn't go round killing people?
- Mr McDonald** There isn't any trouble at home, is there, Mark?
- Mark** No! I mean no, I was just wondering. I saw something on TV about Hitler, that's all, and I wondered if he had a son, what he'd be like.
- Mr McDonald** Hitler didn't have any kids.
- Mark** But if he did? It wouldn't be his fault, would it? All the murders his dad did?
- Mr McDonald** No, it wouldn't be his fault at all. Not unless he felt the same way as his dad did. Or maybe if he refused to face up to the evil things his dad had done... that would be wrong. If we don't face up to things that were wrong in the past then we might do them again. Okay, Mark?
- (Mr McDonald goes to exit)*
- Mark** Mr McDonald...
- Mr McDonald** Yes, Mark?
- Mark** The things Hitler did... all that genocide stuff. I mean, could he have ever thought he was right?
- Mr McDonald** I don't know. Sometimes people think they are doing the right thing even when it is bad. But with Hitler I just don't know.
- Mark** But how can we *know* we're doing the right thing?
-

Extract from *Hitler's Daughter* (the play) by Monkey Baa Theatre Company, based on the book by Jackie French.

Issues for discussion

1. Think about Mark's question at the end of this excerpt. Give your own opinion and tell us if there is any way to certainly know that we are doing the right thing. You might want to include real-life examples.
2. Ever since the times of ancient Greeks, drama has been a way of exploring deep, sensitive and even dangerous ideas. Why is drama such an effective form for this? Think about
 - the ways performance can bring events, characters and ideas to life
 - how dialogue can enable different points of view and thoughtful questions

Think about the relation between democracy, on the one hand, and, on the other, theatre that speaks of large issues like the relation between the individual and the government (as we saw in Antigone). Do you think that under dictatorships, big issues like this would be allowed to be voiced in the theatre?

Do you think that it was accidental that theatre and democracy were both born in the same place, ancient Athens, at around the same time?

3. Can you think of any other historical incidents that have continued to have an effect on individuals? Using any of these as examples, explore the following questions.
 - To what extent are individuals responsible for the actions of governments?
 - Are there ways that individuals can make a difference to the actions of governments?

What role can individuals play to bring about collective action?

Writing dialogue

Write 10-15 lines of dialogue between you and your teacher in which you ask important questions about problems in the world. You should show your teacher attempting to answer these questions.

Share your dialogues with your group and choose one question from one of the scripts to ask the class for discussion.

The question should be one that provokes a variety of answers and opinions.

Lesson 8: Democracy in action - the 'pitch'

In small groups, your task is to develop a 'pitch' for a play. A 'pitch' is where you present your ideas to try to persuade other people to support you. In this case, you are imagining that someone is keen to give your class some funding to put on a play.

There is one catch – only one of the plays from the groups in your class will be given the money. Everyone in your class will be the audience for your pitches, and will 'vote' for the best one. You need to be prepared to justify your decision, based on listening to the pitches.

Your group's 'pitch' should last between 1 and 2 minutes, so you will need to persuade your audience in a short space of time. It will be delivered as a speech to the class, and all the members of your group need to participate equally.

Remember that your class is your 'target audience' – you need to think of ideas that will appeal to these students.

Your pitch might include:

- A brief description of the plot of your play.
Why will your audience be excited to see your play?
- References to how your play will appeal to the audience. What is special about your ideas?
- A discussion of what makes your play unique and valuable. What will you do that looks good on stage?
- Why does your group deserve the money?

Remember to:

- Include the audience in your speech to appeal to them. You might do this by addressing them directly ("You won't believe what happens!") or through rhetorical questions ("Do you believe in undying love?")
- Mention both the main events in your play and the themes ("Through the lives of Amanda and Mei Ling, you'll learn about loyalty and friendship")
- Keep things brief! You do not need to discuss the entire plot of your play – in fact, you may wish to create suspense by not revealing the ending.

Lesson 8 Images



The Acropolis, Theatre of Dionysus and The Lysicrates Monument

Lesson 9: How will we judge? Introducing the Lysicrates Competition

Whenever you watch a play or film, you are making judgements about its value and worth. Perhaps you love stories with strong, heroic characters. Maybe you enjoy stories with humorous and witty dialogue. Or perhaps you like to see stories where you can relate to the situations and events in the story.

These are all personal opinions. This does not make them “good” or “bad” – your opinions matter, and being able to support your opinions with evidence from texts is important so you can justify your ideas.

You are now going to watch a short film called **Marry Me**. Short films generally cover small situations and dramas. This film won Tropfest, an Australian festival of short films. It is about a little girl who is in love with a little boy. The little boy is in love with his bike and wants to impress his older brother. How will the little girl grab his attention?

1. As a class, discuss the film. What was good about it? Do you think it deserved to win a festival competition? These questions may help your discussions
 - What do you think about the lack of dialogue?
 - How has the director been able to show us who the characters are without having many conversations between them?
 - What is important about the setting?
 - Was the ending of the film a happy one?
2. Individually, make a list of the different elements of the performance. Select at five elements, and rank them in order of importance in terms of judging the film. What elements will you select? Why? (You might include characters, atmosphere, setting, dialogue, plot, themes/ideas etc.)
3. As a class, discuss which elements you thought were the most important and write them down. Split up into pairs and give each element a mark out of 5. (1 = Poor, 3 = Average, 5 = Excellent) You will now have a mark out of 25 for the film. Be prepared to justify your mark in class discussion.
4. Talk about the marks you gave the film. Brainstorm a list of the best and worst things about the film. Who did and didn't enjoy it? Why? Discuss what you felt was the most important theme or idea from the film.
5. You are now ready to write a paragraph giving your opinion of the film. On the next page there is an example of what you might write. The cloze activity highlights some vocabulary you might like to use in your own paragraph and the gaps in the passage.

Marry Me is an _____ short film that explores the differences between boys and girls. Whilst a little girl is shown dreaming about her future wedding, her neighbour is only interested in playing on his bicycle. Establishing shots _____ a suburban environment in _____ warm images that evoke a sense of longing for carefree childhood days. The director uses _____ exterior film shots to create a _____ atmosphere and explore the games played by boys and girls. There is little _____, and the boy shows his lack of interest in the girl by barely replying to her efforts to speak to him. However, after the girl shows off her own skills on her bicycle, the boy is amazed and impressed by her. The ending _____, which show the boy reluctantly playing in a pretend wedding with the girl, are humorous and link back to the _____ of the film and the girl's bossy attitude. I enjoyed this film because the characters are easy to relate to and it showed young boys and girls in a _____ and funny manner.

bright
amusing
depict

playful
dialogue
nostalgic

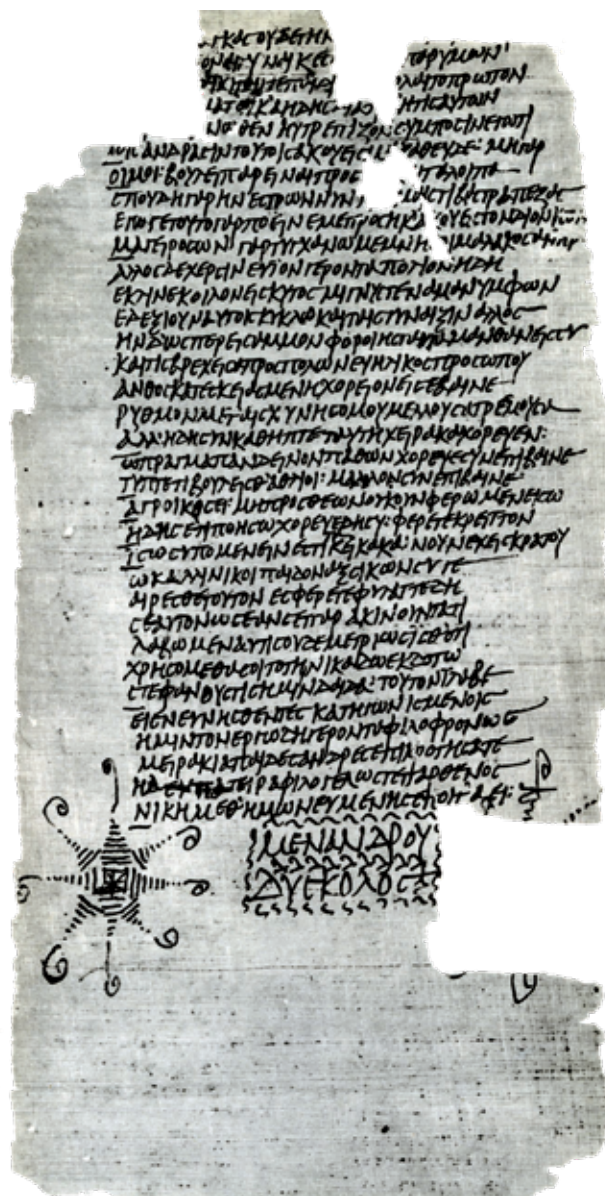
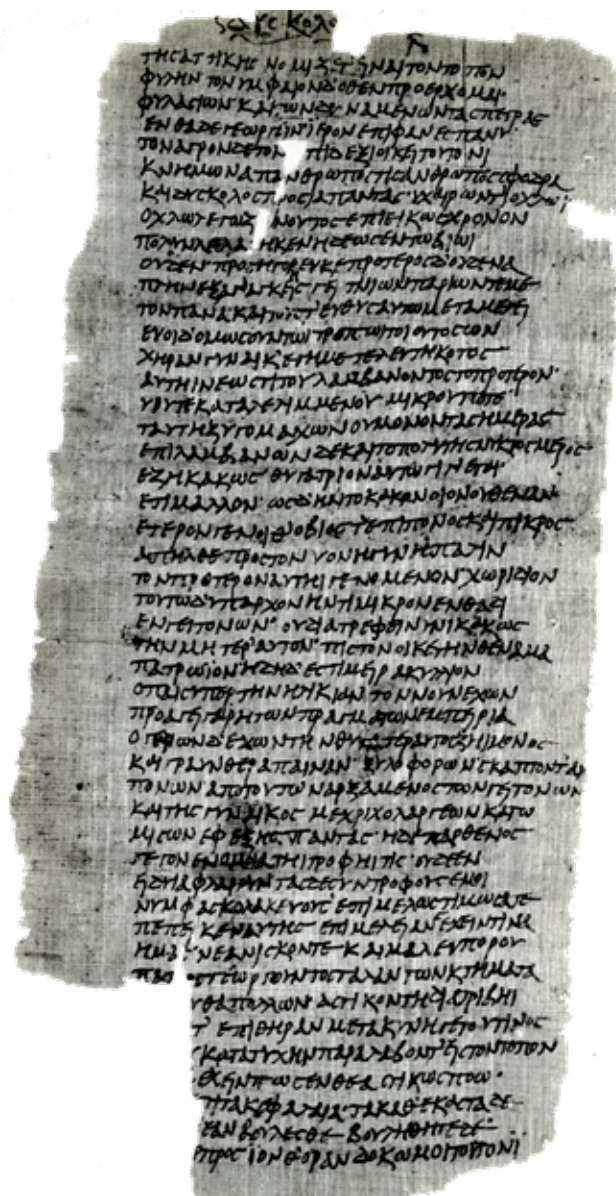
title
shots
realistic

Now that you have thought about how you might **respond to and judge** a performance, you are ready to watch the Martin-Lysicrates Competition's film for 2018.

The competition is based on the Ancient Greek theatre festivals – where the audiences effectively chose the winner of the competition by vociferously expressing their opinions on the plays. You now will be participating in this truly democratic tradition. Actually, we think that it is in 21st century Sydney that this democratic tradition has been revived for the first time in 2500 years.

You will be watching three first acts. You'll be voting for the first act that you most want to see developed into a full play. Because it is possible for the winner to succeed with only a few extra votes, your vote will really matter.

Lesson 9 Images



The papyrus - showing the substance on which the plays of antiquity have come down to us - just as strong as marble.

Lesson 11: Review and Reflection

Now that you have seen the Lysicrates Foundation's film, it is your turn to *review* or *reflect on* what you have seen. What do the two terms mean to you?

Put a cross (X) in the appropriate column. You can discuss your answers as a class. Many of the words may be appropriate to both text types.

Look at the following list of terms, and decide whether the words most fit a *review* or a *reflection* – or both!

Word	Review?	Reflection?
Discovered		x
Strengths	x	
Considering	x	x
Implications		
Significance		
Personally		
I/My		
Opinion		
Recognise		
Insights		
Climax		
Powerful		
Sympathetic		
Convincing		
Intriguing		
Spectacular		
Mundane		
Learnt		
Changed		
Emphasised		
Examined		
Explored		
Startling		
Bland		
Sentimental		

Many of these words can be used to **judge** a script. Write some sentences using **two** or more of the words from the list. Try to choose words that you would not normally use to expand your vocabulary.

Some examples are:

The love between the characters was *emphasised* through the often *sentimental* and moving *dialogue* between them.

This script *examined* the importance of making good decisions, a topic of personal *significance* to me.

At the *climax* of the action, the constant conflict between the characters became *mundane* and failed to engage the audience.

You may write EITHER a review or a reflection. Even if you have not written a reflective piece of writing before, this activity is a good one to experiment with doing so.

Consider some similarities and differences between the two text types:

Review	Reflection
Inform the reader about a film/performance, discussing the good and bad points about the reviewer's experience	Contain information about a film/performance, focusing on the reviewer's experience and what they learnt
Try to be objective, with some room for personal opinions	Begin with personal opinions/beliefs, supported by evidence from the text
May contain a number of different language devices, including first-person narration ("I"), second-person narration ("you"), rhetorical questions and descriptive language	Often written in first person ("I"), including descriptive language
Commonly published in the media (newspapers or online)	A more personal piece of writing, often used in blogs and own journals.

Both these paragraphs focus on the same subject. Which one do you think best suits your purpose?

Interesting opening, to grab the attention of the reader

Review

Have you ever seen a world where everyone was the same? Tim Burton's film Edward Scissorhands explores the problems created by a society based on conformity. The film presents a suburban world where cars leave for work at the same time, houses are almost identical, and people fear anyone who is different. Viewers are shown a character who appears to be frightening in his appearance, yet essentially harmless.

Information about the film and its main themes

Focus on film audience

Focuses directly on own experience

Reflection

The experience of studying Edward Scissorhands made me consider the similarities between Edward's world and my own. Although the director's use of pastel colours and the similarities in the costumes worn by the characters make the world seem eerie and restrictive, it is really just an extreme version of our own society. Yes, we are equally cruel to those who are different from us. Edward's unusual appearance and the way that the other characters fear him reminded me of the way we treat people with disabilities

Use of the 1st person

Refers to own response and thoughts

Now you are ready to compose your review or piece of reflective writing. Some good ways for you to prepare could include taking notes to answer the following questions:

- Note down some of the most interesting moments from the plays in the film. What made these memorable? Are there any quotes that you can remember?
- How did having to judge the scripts and vote for them change the way you watched the film?
- Did you think that the play you “liked” most was the “best”? Why or why not?
- What did your class think of the plays? Did you tend to agree with the other students? What were some interesting points that were brought up in class discussions?
- How did the plays appeal to their “target audience” – junior secondary school students? What situations or characters did they present that you could relate to?

You should aim to write between 250 to 350 words.

You can focus on the play that you preferred or try to discuss positive and negative points about all the plays.