



IDOMENEO

DRAMA & THEATRE STUDIES EDUCATION RESOURCE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES BY KATE ELLIS

DRAMA CURRICULUM

	YEAR 7-8	YEAR 9-10
<p>EXPLORE AND EXPRESS IDEAS</p>	<p><i>Develop roles and characters consistent with situation, dramatic forms and performance styles to convey status, relationships and intentions.</i></p> <p>The opera <i>Idomeneo</i> houses a great many characters, each with their own relationship to others and intentions. They also help the audience explore power and status. Consider Elettra's circumstances for instance. As a character betrothed to the future King, on first impression, she has more power than Ilia. But Idamante prefers Ilia so one could argue Ilia has greater status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Use singular statues and the expressive skills to explore characters as individuals. · Then, pair up and explore character relationships using tableaux. · Can you then create tableaux of four or six characters that show their shifting status when they are in relationship? · Have a conversation in your group after. How did it feel to embody an individual character and then their character in relationship to another in <i>Idomeneo</i>? Do you have empathy for any characters after this exercise? 	<p><i>Improvise with the elements of drama and narrative structure to develop ideas and explore subtext to shape devised and scripted drama.</i></p> <p>Many of the characters in <i>Idomeneo</i> follow the archetypal journey of the Hero's Myth* (see Contextualisation chapter in the <i>Idomeneo</i> Education Resource). This myth has its own narrative structure, a circle, whereby the hero is 'called to adventure' and learns something new by the time they complete the cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Using the resource on page 7 of this resource, along with the elements of sound and contrast, create a soundscape that highlights the difference between one character's mood at the beginning of their hero's journey and, the end. For example, Idamante is in turmoil when he learns that his father has died but then in contrast, is the King at the end of the opera. Can you use pitch, tone, pace and volume to express these two opposing states? <p>What about Elettra? At the beginning she is betrothed to Idamante. At the end of their hero's journey, in contrast, she is raging at the injustice of his now marriage to Ilia. How can you express this shift using voice and sound?</p>

	YEAR 7-8	YEAR 9-10
DRAMA PRACTICES	<p><i>Develop and refine expressive skills in voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in different performance styles and conventions.</i></p> <p><i>Idomeneo</i> is an opera. Some of the conventions of opera are singing, surtitles and acts. A surtitle is like a subtitle but exists at the top of the stage above the performers rather than at the bottom of the screen say, when we watch a movie or television series in a language other than our own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram offer users the option to 'caption' videos for the hearing impaired. Memes also use words to recontextualise or give new meaning to an image. Can you capture a scene in <i>Idomeneo</i> using tableaux and expressive skills and then add a surtitle or words to give new meaning to the moment? Can you create a meme of a scene from <i>Idomeneo</i>? 	<p><i>Practise and refine the expressive capacity of voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in a range of forms, styles and performances spaces.</i></p> <p><i>Idomeneo</i> the opera is performed in the amazing Palais theatre in St Kilda. Its art deco architectural design sits right by the ocean on the lands of the Bunurong, Wurundjeri and Wadawurrung people. This performance space was chosen specifically because of its close proximity to the sea. The grandness of the ocean not only gives audiences a visceral experience of the opera's setting but emphasises one of the themes, Nature Amplified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In groups of four, explore the natural world of your school. Get close, get personal, look for details. What is the inherent drama of different outdoor locations? If there was a mood to the places you visit, what would they be? · Choose a scene from <i>Idomeneo</i> to enact in a new outdoor location at your school. What works? What doesn't? What amplifies the emotion of the scene? What could give the audience a greater visceral experience or help them understand the scene better?

PRESENT AND PERFORM

YEAR 7-8

Perform devised and scripted drama using a range of performance styles, maintaining commitment to role and applying stagecraft.

Idomeneo's amazing costumes have been designed by Anna Cordingley. Costume is an element of stagecraft alongside set, lighting, makeup, props and theatre technologies.

- Looking at the costume renders in the Visual Story of the *Idomeneo* Education Resource, reimagine your own costume for a scene that happens for ONE character BEFORE we meet them in the opera. For instance, *Idomeneo* or one of his soldiers DURING war or Arbace while his King, *Idomeneo* is away (maybe they are in their pyjamas as there's not much to do when you are the Kings confidant?).

- To this you will also need to brainstorm ideas for life before the opera for one of the characters. Brainstorming is a first step in the playmaking skills, the skills we use to devise and script original drama.

YEAR 9-10

Perform devised and scripted drama making deliberate artistic choices and shaping design elements to unify dramatic meaning for an audience.

Director Lindy Hume has made some cuts to the original opera *Idomeneo*. These are her artistic choices based on her own expertise, experience and what she believes a contemporary audience might need or want from a production of *Idomeneo* in 2023.

- Using the playmaking skills brainstorming, improvising and scripting, choose a scene from *Idomeneo* to edit. Base your edits on ONE of the themes of this production to ensure the theme is highlighted.

- Brainstorm your ideas first then join a group to share your ideas. Choose one idea and brainstorm again, each person adding new creative ideas to the scene to help amplify your chosen theme.

- Physicalise your ideas by improvising the scene. Get up and move the scene. Set a timer to help you act on the spot (i.e. not too much pausing and thinking and talking, just be in role!).

- Sit together and put your improvisations into a script. You now have your own creative vision for a scene in *Idomeneo*

RESPOND AND INTERPRET

YEAR 7-8

Identify and connect specific features and purposes of drama from contemporary and past times, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore viewpoints and enrich their drama making.

Idomeneo the opera draws heavily from Greek Mythology (see chapter 'Contextualisation' and 'Theatre Vocabulary' in the *Idomeneo* Education Resource). With respect to the incredible stories to come from Greece and Rome some 3000 years ago, in comparison, Australia's First Nations people have been creating stories and mythologies for over 65,000 years.

· As a research task, another of the steps in devising theatre using the playmaking skills, can you find an Aboriginal story that expresses in some way one of the themes of *Idomeneo* (Radical Optimism, Nature Amplified, Community and People and Order and Chaos)?

YEAR 9-10

Analyse a range of drama from contemporary and past times, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore differing viewpoints and develop understanding of drama practice across local, national and international contexts.

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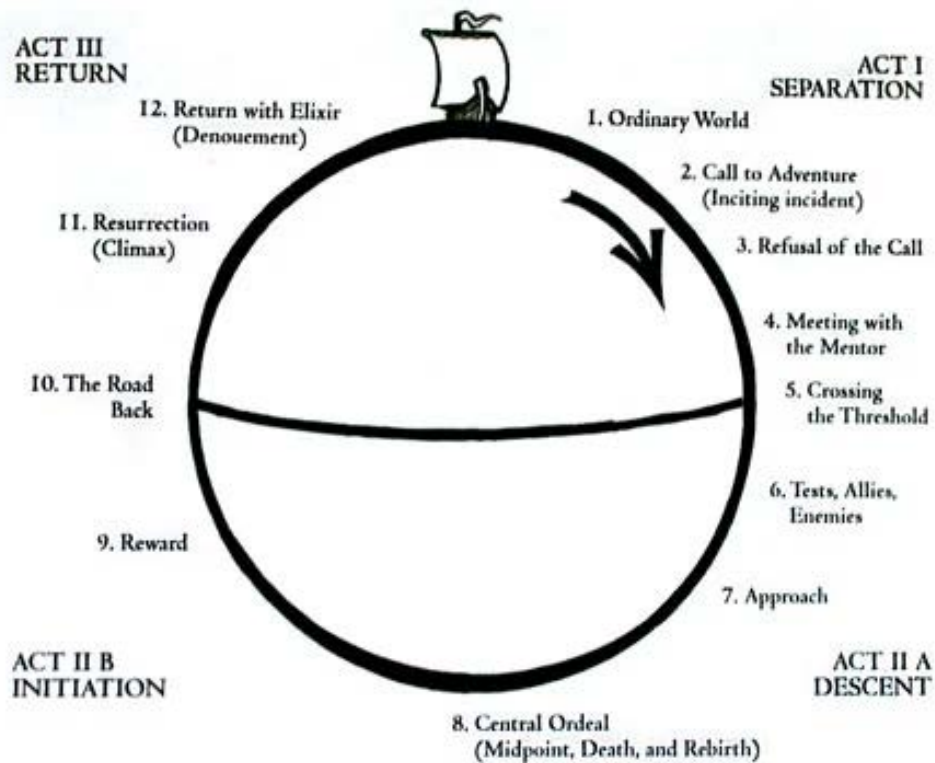
1. As a research task, compare and contrast one of the Gods in *Idomeneo* the opera and a spiritual figure in Indigenous Australian story. Find three qualities of each character that are similar and three that are different.

2. Focusing on the traits (we never play race), partner with someone in the class to create 6 short tableaux or 'freeze frames' that capture the three similarities and differences.

3. Afterwards, reflect with the audience on the differing viewpoints these gods might have on the play *Idomeneo*. On the characters actions. How does it open up your understanding of the world of *Idomeneo* the opera?

VCE DRAMA

	ACTIVITY
UNIT 1: INTRODUCING PERFORMANCE STYLES	<p><i>Idomeneo</i> is an opera created in 1764. Some of the conventions include singing, surtitles and acts. This production of <i>Idomeneo</i> has been recontextualised in part through the use of modern images from nature and monochrome/ city style costumes. Director Lindy Hume wanted to bring <i>Idomeneo</i>'s themes to a contemporary landscape.</p> <p>Use the expressive skills to embody one character from <i>Idomeneo</i>. Use transformation of character to meld into a future expression of this character alongside the theme radical optimism. How might their life change if they are optimistic about the future of their community? Can you find a similar 'character' in contemporary society and meld into a future expression of them? For example <i>Idomeneo</i> and Volodymyr Zelenskyy or Ilia and Malala Yousafzai.</p>
UNIT 2: AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY	<p>Video Designer David Bergman alongside Cinematographer Catherine Pettman have captured and projected images of the Australian landscape during <i>Idomeneo</i>. Explore your own connection to the images. Is that your understanding of Australia? Choose an Australian icon that contrasts one of the images used in this production of <i>Idomeneo</i>. Using tension, transformation of place and the expressive skills, move this icon from their everyday world to the landscape chosen from <i>Idomeneo</i>. Use other bodies to create each location. How does their movement, voice, facial expression, and gesture change in the new environment?</p>



Act 1: Separation

Ordinary World... The everyday, mundane, ordinary world of the central character. In stark contrast to the world they are about to embark on.

Call to Adventure... The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure.

Refusal of the Call... Fear or reluctance to accept / embark on the hero adventure.

Meeting with the Mentor... A character that prepares the hero for the unknown. Highly symbolic. Like a parental figure, teacher student or doctor patient relationship.

Crossing the Threshold... The hero commits to the adventure / to solving the problem and moves from the ordinary world to the unknown.

Tests, Allies, Enemies... There are new problems, enemies & tests. The hero must learn the ways of this new world and find people whose values are aligned to help.

Approach to the inmost cave... The edge of a dangerous place, sometimes deep underground, where the object of the quest is hidden. often, it's the headquarters of the hero's greatest enemy, the most dangerous spot in the Special World, the **Inmost Cave**. When the hero enters that fearful place, they will cross the second major threshold. Heroes often pause at the gate to prepare, plan, and outwit the villain's guards. This is the phase of **Approach**.

Act 2: A Descent

Central Ordeal (midpoint, death and rebirth)... A direct confrontation with the hero's greatest fear. A critical moment where the hero must die (metaphorically or literally) in order to be born again.

Act 3: Initiation

Reward... a sword, an elixir... Something for their efforts.

The Road Back... Sometimes a final chase scene. If they have not resolved everything on the quest, this is when they will 'come back' for one final test.

Resurrection... A purification before they are allowed back into their community. They have blood on their hands! They might also have one last ordeal.

Return with the Elixir... The hero returns to the ordinary world with the elixir, sword... or knowledge.

From The Writer's Journey by Christopher Vogler. Michael Weise Production, 1998.