

# 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove' by Susan E Boyer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet #4

## Storytelling through Drama

Drama is a type of storytelling that can take different forms. Through drama, actors can create an engaging story through body language, facial expression and actions, without using words.

It can also involve performing a written or scripted story. Then the actors learn sections of a dialogue and perform their part in the story with words and actions. They take on the role of particular characters. With the right sound effects, costumes and scenery added, an audience is drawn into the setting and mood of the story.

### Scripted role-play

1. Everyone in class can do the following activity, working in pairs.

After reading Chapter 1 of 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove', return to page 4, which has the courtroom interview of nine-year-old convict John Hudson by a judge. Discuss the following:

Imagine the judge and John Hudson in the courtroom. Discuss how John Hudson and the judge would be dressed and write a brief description below. (Check the images in Chapter 1 and a different court scene on page 17. See more information at: <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Judges-and-juries.jsp>)

John Hudson: \_\_\_\_\_

Judge: \_\_\_\_\_

What would each person's body language be like? Discuss and demonstrate.

What would each person's voice be like as he speaks? Discuss and demonstrate.

2. In pairs, one person takes the role of the judge and the other person plays the role of John Hudson.

Using the words of the court interview on page 4, role-play the scene as you imagine it happened.

### Creating drama without words

3. After reading Chapter 2 of 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove', return to page 10 -11 which shows the scene of a convict, Susannah, arriving aboard the prison ship *Dunkirk* with her baby.

Who are the three characters speaking in this scene?

\_\_\_\_\_

What would each person's body language be like? Discuss and demonstrate.

In groups of three, mime the scene (use only actions, no words) to show each person's actions and feelings.

### Setting a scene without words

4a. Read the following paragraph from Chapter 3 of 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove'.

Then mime the scene, showing Elizabeth's movement, actions and feelings.

As the ship rolled and pitched thirteen-year-old Elizabeth Hayward felt another wave of nausea wash over her. She squeezed her eyelids tight but the blackness brought the reality of her situation even more intensely to her ears and nostrils. The groans were constant, the smell overpowering.

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4b. What would Elizabeth's surroundings be like and how could they be created to bring the scene alive?


### Portraying different perspectives

Read pages 42-44 describing one of the first meetings between Europeans and Aboriginal people in 1788.

5a. Where is the setting? \_\_\_\_\_

5b. Whose perspectives or viewpoints are shown in this scene?


6. Chapter 9 (pages 42-44 ) portrays two groups experiencing something unknown for the first time. There isn't much dialogue in the scene; it is shown through expressive action and only a few words.

Form a small group and devise a ten-minute performance based on the scene in Chapter 9. In preparation, you can use the questions listed for Activity 10 on the following page.

### Building distinct and memorable characters

7. While reading 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove' you will see there were varied characters living at Sydney Cove with distinct personalities. For example, read the following description and decide who it is:

This person was recorded as the oldest convict on the First Fleet but was probably younger than the listed age. This person liked to invent and tell wild stories and was known to 'twist the truth' to their benefit.

Answer:

\_\_\_\_\_

Check your answer by reading page 19 of 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove'.

Draw a picture of the character using the description of the person's appearance and personality.

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Worksheet #5

Drama in the classroom

8. Choose a character from 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove'. They are listed on pages 250-251. Write a list of six questions you would like to ask if it were possible to interview that person. (Remember they all really lived at Sydney Cove between 1788 - 1792.)

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9. **Questioning in role** is a drama technique in which someone takes the role of a character from a story and answers questions as if they were that particular character. It is also known as **'hot-seating'**.

Working in a group, choose someone to take the role of the character chosen in Activity 8, from 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove. Use the questions written above to interview the person.

The interviewee should answer the questions spontaneously, remembering they are 'in the shoes' of their character living in 1788.

10. While reading 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove' you will see many scenes that could be dramatised.

Choose one scene to perform to your class, and in preparation discuss the following questions:

What is the physical setting of the story? How will you create the scene?

What is the time period and how will you depict it?

What is the mood and how will you evoke it?

Who are the main characters?

Are other people necessary in the scene?

What kind of language, accent and body language will each character use?

What kind of clothing or body covering will each character wear?

What other issues do you need to discuss before you begin?