

Activity: Theatre Design

Theme: Dance Knowledge

Producing artistic product requires many people and much time devoted to its development and presentation. Consider the enormous number of roles for people involved in the development of a large scale production, such as a school musical, or a show at a large city theatre.

1. As a class, view the clip, *Backstage*, where Tara is guided backstage at the Sydney Opera House. Discuss the external design of the Opera House, the involvement of the original architect, Jørn Utzon, and the events surrounding the construction. Have students respond to the following questions:
 - a. What is your first impression of the external design of the Sydney Opera House?
 - b. Why is the Sydney Opera House so often used in iconic photos of Australia?
 - c. How does it make you feel when the Sydney Opera House is used to promote Australian tourism?
2. In the previous clip, *Swan Lake*, the National Dance Company were performing on a stage set within a proscenium arch, a frame which separates the audience from the stage, usually by a curtain, an orchestra pit, and floor lights. The stage floor is level and the audience slopes upwards in sections, from stalls, to dress circle. This varies from earlier stages in the 1700s to the mid-20th Century where the stage would be raised, sloped and the audience set on a level surface, looking up at the performers. This was not ideal for dance. Ask the students to explain why this might be.
3. In the Episode *Perfection*, Tara walks through a number of spaces at the Sydney Opera House. Watch the episode and pause it as she enters each room.
 - a. What is this room called and what is it used for?
 - b. List all of the rooms she visits.
4. Individually or in small groups have students draw a map of Tara's backstage journey.
5. Include the stage, curtain, the wings, side stage area, space behind the stage and dressing rooms. Students may also wish to add spaces they think should be or could be

Activity: Theatre Design

part of a backstage design: including costume room, warm up spaces, greenroom, cafeteria, first aid room or physiotherapist space.

6. Encourage students to be “hands on”, to use a range of materials to draft the backstage area, using a number of A4 sheets of paper and piecing them together to form a bird’s eye, aerial view. Ask students to compare their designs and assess what rooms they may have missed.
7. Have students research the actual floor plans of the Sydney Opera House and compare them with their own designs. They should also research the history of the Sydney Opera House and develop a poster or brochure to hand out to tourist groups about the history and the significance of the Opera House.
8. Ask students to complete **Student Activity Sheet E6.5: Theatre Design** to match up the name of the area with their description and location in a typical theatre.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E6.5 : Theatre Design

Useful resources

- [Sydney Opera House](#)
- [Parts of a theatre](#)



NAME:

Student Activity Sheet: E6.5
Activity: Theatre Design

Episode 6: Perfection
Clip: Backstage

Theatre Design

Match up the area of the theatre with its description and research and fill in where each area is usually situated in a typical theatre.

Area	Description	Location
Stage	The middle level of audience seating	
Dress Circle	Where the audio and visual components are controlled from	
Circle	Where performers relax before going on stage	
Stalls	Where the audience enter the theatre	
Lighting box	Where the performance occurs	
Green Room	The highest level of audience seating	
Wings	Where the performers put on their makeup	
Foyer	Where performers wait to go on stage	
Snack Bar	Where injuries are treated	
Dressing rooms	Any area to the back and side of the stage	
First Aid	The lowest level of audience seating	
Backstage	Where people purchase their food and drinks from	