

Monkey Baa respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this nation and honours their continued cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, waters and seas. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, on whose land we work, live and share stories

Always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Hello!

My name is Alex, and I am the Learning & Engagement Specialist at Monkey Baa. I have created this pack to help you explore our production of Yong and support your classroom work.

This pack follows Yong's journey from China to the international dance scene, providing both the story of the play and its historical context, along with activities for your students.

The pack is designed for students in Years 5, 6, 7, and 8. Inside, you will find History and Drama activities directly linked to the Australian Curriculum. It also includes information on how we adapted the book for the stage.

The activities in this pack align with the following General Capabilities and Cross-curriculum Priorities:

- Literacy
- Creative and Critical Thinking
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding
- Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia
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This pack includes contributions from Eva Di Cesare, Darren Yap, Jenevieve Chang, and Wern Mak.





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Monkey Baa

Monkey Baa creates great theatre for young people, and for over 26 years, we have presented award-winning theatrical experiences that inspire and empower audiences across Australia. We are one of Australia's most widely touring companies, with over 29 national tours to 135 regional and remote communities, 5 international tours, and 4,000 performances reaching more than 1.5 million young people.

We empower young people to shape their lives through inspiring theatre and creative experiences. We create, present, and tour performances powered by imagination, with eye-opening ideas and boundless fun.

Our vision is a world where all young people are emboldened by creativity, and our mission is to empower them to shape and navigate their lives through inspirational theatre and creative experiences.



Yong

Set against the backdrop of the Australian Gold Rush of 1857, Yong is a new Australian play by Jenevieve Chang. Mixing historical fact and narrative fiction, Yong takes us on a journey across land and sea, from China to the goldfields of Australia.

Yong and his father leave their small village and travel across the seas, hoping to strike gold and find their fortune in the goldfields of Ballarat. However, despite his family's desperate need for money, Yong does not want to be on this journey. On the surface, he appears to be an honourable son, but bubbling beneath is a deepening resentment toward his father and a longing for home. Faced with momentous change, Yong's courage and inner strength are tested, and through overcoming difficult challenges, he discovers a resilience in himself that he never knew he had.

Writer

Jenevieve Chang

Director

Darin Yap

Production Designer

James Browne

Composer

Max Lambert

Lighting Designer

Ben Brockman

Movement Director

Angie Diaz

Sound Designer

Zac Saric

Adaptation Consultant

Sandie Eldridge

Chinese Cultural Consultant

Charles Zhang

First Nations Consultant &**Writer of the First Nations Scene**

Richard Frankland

Illustration

Kim Siew

“Yong is a universally resonant story about a young boy who must learn to step out of the shadow of others' expectations to find himself. It explores what it means to be a son, what it takes to be a parent, and the push and pull of community. Most of all, it shines a light on Australia's history, bringing focus to the sacrifices and contributions that have helped build the resilient nation we are today.”

— Jenevieve Chang, Writer



Illustration by Kim Siew

Production Photos



Production photos by Tiffany Garvie
featuring performer Wern Mak

Themes of the Play

Identity and Cultural Belonging

Yong's story centers on his struggle with identity and cultural belonging as he leaves his Chinese village for the Australian goldfields. He must balance maintaining his cultural identity with adapting to a new land, highlighting the universal need to stay connected to our roots while adjusting to new environments.

Family Dynamics and Relationships

Yong's relationship with his father is central to the play, marked by emotional complexities. He navigates the tension between being an honorable son and pursuing his own desires, highlighting the sacrifices families make, the expectations they face, and the dual nature of love and loyalty as both supportive and challenging.

Resilience and Personal Growth

Throughout the play, Yong faces challenges that test his resilience, from adapting to a new culture to enduring harsh conditions. These experiences foster his personal growth, transforming him from a reluctant traveler into a strong, determined individual who discovers new strengths within himself.

Migration and Cultural Exchange

Yong's journey from China to Australia mirrors the broader experience of migration and cultural exchange. The goldfields, where people from diverse backgrounds converge, showcase the complexities of cultural interaction and adaptation.



**Making
the *Play***

The Vision

**Theatre begins with an idea,
a spark of imagination.
This is what we call the vision.**

At Monkey Baa, we find inspiration everywhere — from the world around us and the people we share it with. We believe in the power of stories to connect us all, which is why many of our plays are based on picture books and novels by Australian authors and writers from around the world.

Our play Yong is based on a novel by Australian author Janeen Brian. Our Artistic Director, Eva Di Cesare, and Artistic Associate, Sandra Eldridge, felt that the story would make a fantastic play because of its strong themes of courage, identity and belonging.

Seeing this potential, Eva brought together a team of talented creatives to turn the novel into a stage production. Throughout 2021 and 2022, they worked hard to develop the script and bring the story to life on stage. The team focused on making sure the play was engaging and stayed true to the heart of the original book, creating an experience that audiences of all ages could enjoy and learn from.



Eva Di Cesare



Jenevieve Chang

Interview with Eva Di Cesare

What is your role as Artistic Director of Monkey Baa?

My role is to lead the company's artistic vision. I decide which works to present to our audiences through a lot of consultation with artists, young people, and our team.



What drew you to Janeen Brian's novel *Yong: The Journey of an Unworthy Son*?

I have known about Janeen Brian's book for a few years. We were drawn to this story because its protagonist is a young boy who is forced to undertake a huge physical journey. However, he is also on a very personal and emotional internal journey. We have always been attracted to stories rooted in history, particularly those where characters go through extraordinary situations and are transformed by the end.

Why did you want to adapt the novel into a play?

We loved the drama in the story, and the characters were so rich. We were keen to explore how we could turn this story with all these characters into a one-man show. We could see straight away that it could become a fascinating and dramatic work for the stage, starting with a huge storm at sea. Another reason was the challenge of taking something clearly set in the 1850s and finding ways to make it relevant to today's young people, so they connect emotionally with Yong.

The Script

The vision is transformed into a script by a playwright.

Just like a poet writes poems, a playwright writes plays. Playwrights are experts in creating stories for the stage. They write the characters, scenes, and plots that make up a play. A play is a type of writing that includes two main parts: dialogue and stage directions.

Yong is a play written by Australian playwright Jenevieve Chang, who also writes stories, performs, and develops scripts. The play was written over many months and was developed with the help of a director, designer, composer, and actor.

To work on the script, the Monkey Baa team even went to Ballarat, where the play is set. While there, Jenevieve and the creative team experimented with the play's structure, dialogue, stage directions, and design elements like costumes, props, sets, lighting, and sound.

Dialogue is what the characters say.

Yong:

"Father! He's coming at me with a face more thunderous than the storm in the sky, and straight away I know something isn't right."

Stage directions give instructions to the actors or give information about the play's world.

Sound Effects:

An ear-splitting shudder as the ship heaves to one side. A beam of the ship breaks.

Lighting Effects:

Lightning continues to streak through the sky and changes into a strobe effect.

Stage Direction:

As Yong struggles to regain his balance, he reaches for the broken beam.

Interview with Jenevieve Chang



What is your role as a playwright?

I've taken the original story from the book by Janeen Brian and adapted it for the stage for young audiences. In this process, I've had to think about the specific requirements of a stage production, such as making the play a one-man show, and how to represent the many worlds of the story in a single theatre design. A big thanks to Monkey Baa Artistic Associate Sandie Eldridge for getting me started on this creative journey.

What is exciting about adapting *Yong* for the stage and a new audience?

I loved getting into the head of a 13-year-old boy from the 19th century who has to deal with universally relatable issues: being far away from home, the anxiety of not being 'good enough,' and the loss of a parent. It's also such a privilege to highlight the rich history of Chinese settlers in this country—their struggles, hopes, and contributions.

What challenges did you face in adapting *Yong* for the stage?

The adaptation process always comes with big questions about how to bring the story to life in a completely new context—what to preserve, what to leave out, and what to reimagine. As a Chinese-Australian, I also have a specific cultural relationship to the material, and being able to lean into that while respecting the source material can sometimes feel like walking a tightrope. Thankfully, I've had a supportive team around me that has helped build my confidence and autonomy in making creative choices, while also ensuring we have rigorous dialogue!

The Rehearsal

Once a script is developed, it is handed over to a director and the rehearsals begin.

A rehearsal is a practice session before a play is performed in front of an audience. During the rehearsal period, actors learn their lines and movements (called blocking), theatre designers create the setting, composers write the music, and playwrights develop the script. This is all guided by the director.

The director is like the leader of the production. They guide the actors, decide how the action will unfold on stage, and shape how the play will look and feel for the audience. The director works with the creative team to bring the story to life. For Yong, director Darren Yap worked with the team to make decisions about what happens on stage and helped design elements like costumes, props, lighting, sets, sound, and music.

Darren Yap directed Yong by working closely with the actor and the creative team, including set, costume, lighting, and music designers. His job was to bring all these elements together to create a powerful production. Darren was drawn to direct Yong because of his personal connection to the story. As an Australian Chinese person, he related to the history of Chinese immigrants like his great-great-grandfather, who came to Australia during the gold rush. This made the story very meaningful for him.



Interview with Darren Yap



What is your role as a director?

My job is to bring the story of Yong to life. I collaborate with the actor, as well as with the set, costume, lighting, and music designers. Ultimately, I am responsible for bringing all the elements together to create a cohesive production.

What drew you to direct Yong?

As an Australian Chinese person, I feel a deep connection to the story of Yong. It reflects the experiences of my ancestors who came to Australia during the gold rush. For me, it's important to tell this story today so that we never forget our history. Directing Yong is very personal to me. In the 1850s, my great-great-grandfather came to Australia to seek gold and planned to return to China, but he never did. Instead, he made Australia his home. Now, my father is 94 years old and nearing the end of his life. I am his youngest child and still seek his love and approval. I deeply resonate with Yong's emotions as a son trying to prove himself to his father.

What challenges have you faced in directing Yong?

Since this is a new work and a one-person show, where the actor plays multiple roles, I have to explore and test different ways to bring the action and emotion to life. Sometimes the ideas work, and other times they don't. That's the challenge of creating something new—constantly testing and refining. But I love the process!



The Design

As the show takes shape in rehearsal, the designer begins to create the world of the play.

There are many types of theatre designers, such as costume, scenic, lighting, projection, and prop designers. Theatre designers collaborate with the creative team, including the director, producer, and sometimes the playwright, to shape the visual world of a play. They decide what the performers will wear, the environment they will perform in, and the objects or props that will appear on stage.

For Yong, the world of the play is created by theatre designer James Browne, who designed the sets, costumes, and props. This is James' third show with Monkey Baa; he also worked on Josephine Wants to Dance and Pete the Sheep.

Sets, or scenery, create the setting or world for a play. A set can be anything from a single chair to an elaborate street scene, whether custom-made or an actual item used in the play. Costumes are the clothes actors wear to represent a character or type of person. They help tell the story by giving actors a foundation for their performances and providing the audience with context about the characters. Props, or properties, are objects used on stage by actors during a play. Props include anything movable or portable on a stage, separate from the actors, scenery, costumes, and lighting equipment.

Interview with James Browne



What is your role as a designer?

As the designer for Yong, my first step is to read the script and note what's needed to visually tell the story. I then meet with the director to develop concepts for the sets, props, and costumes. After finalizing these visual elements, I share them with the team, including producers, actors, and designers, using research materials, sketches, plans, and scale models to help everyone envision the final look. Throughout this process, every detail must be carefully considered.

What has inspired you when designing the sets, costumes, and props for Yong?

The script and original book of Yong were major inspirations, providing details about locations and scene requirements. As a designer, my job is to research the characters, setting, time period, weather, and time of day to inform our design concepts. For Yong, we aimed to blend traditional Chinese elements with a colonial Australian environment, creating contrasting textures that reflect both worlds.

What has challenged you when designing the sets, costumes, and props for Yong?

One challenge was that Yong is a one-person show, so we needed to use visual elements, like abstract projections, lighting, and props, to help the actor tell the story and engage the audience's imagination. We also faced technical challenges: everything—sets, props, lighting, sound equipment, and costumes—had to fit into a small truck and be easily collapsible. Each set piece needed to fit through different theatre doors, be visible from all seats, and be set up quickly by a small crew. Finally, everything had to be both safe and spectacular!

In the Spotlight



Wern Mak

What is an actor?

An actor interprets and portrays characters in a performance. These characters can be based on real people or be entirely fictional. In the play *Yong*, the actor Wern Mak plays not only *Yong* but also all of the other characters in the story. While these characters are fictional, they are inspired by the experiences of Chinese and Australian people during the nineteenth century.

About Wern

Originally from Melbourne, Wern Mak is a Malaysian Chinese actor dedicated to increasing representation of Asian men on screen and stage. Growing up with few role models in the media, Wern aims to challenge stereotypes and inspire a new generation of Asian actors. He is eager to explore all aspects of himself through acting and tell diverse stories. At the start of his career, Wern is excited to be in an industry with room for growth and is ready to use his NIDA training to make a positive impact in the arts. Wern was recently seen in the national touring production of *Hamilton*.

Interview with Wern Mak



What is your role as an actor?

My main goal and role as an actor is always to tell the story in the best way I can. Luckily, in this show, I have the wonderful support of writer Jenevieve Chang and director Darren Yap to guide me to the heart and soul of the characters and themes of the play. If I do my job well, the story can be told with the intention and emotion they envisioned.

How did you prepare to play the role of Yong?

Preparing for this play has been a very collaborative experience. Jenevieve has written some clever and clear characters, which is especially helpful in a one-person show. Using that foundation, Darren and I have worked together to bring these characters to life through physical and vocal expression. With the support of this team, I've gained the confidence to perform this piece and create a range of characters that, hopefully, keep the audience engaged for the 50 or so minutes of the play.

What has challenged you when playing the role of Yong?

The main challenge with playing Yong is that it's a one-person show, so I'm playing all the characters and telling the story by myself on stage. It's scary and challenging, but knowing I get to share this story with young people who might have similar experiences to Yong makes it easier. Still, being the only person on stage is terrifying—there's nowhere to hide, and I have to stay fully engaged for the entire performance. But how exciting is that?!

**Yong's
Journey
and
Historical
Context**

Sailing from China

“It has been three full moons since I last saw my grandma, my brothers and my baby sister. It feels like Father and I have travelled so far from our village that we’ll soon drop off the edge of the world.”

— Yong

At the beginning of the play, Yong and his companions sail from China to Australia to seek their fortune in the goldfields. News of the Australian gold rush reached China in the 1850s (nineteenth century, during the Qing Dynasty), leading to a significant increase in Chinese migration to Australia. The discovery of gold inspired many Chinese people to undertake the long and challenging journey to Australia, hoping to find wealth in the goldfields. Between 1850 and 1870, many Chinese immigrants worked in the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales.

The play is set between Robe (Bunganditj country) in South Australia and Ballarat (Wadawurrung country) in Victoria, where Yong and his companions arrive at the end of their long journey. Yong’s journey from China to Australia mirrors the experiences of many Chinese people who crossed dangerous seas with dreams of discovering gold. Life at sea in the nineteenth century (1800–1900) was both uncomfortable and unsafe. Travelers had to bring their own clothing, utensils, and bedding for the voyage. In addition to harsh storms, they faced poor hygiene, limited ventilation and light, cramped conditions, and the threat of disease. A disaster at sea or shipwreck offered little hope for rescue, as few sailors or passengers could swim, and lifeboats were rarely sufficient for everyone on board.



Exploring Australia

“I step onto the shore and the air makes me thirsty just from breathing. The brightness of the sun hurts my skin. It’s so different from home.”

— Yong

Next in Yong’s journey, he and his companions land on Australian shores. Many Chinese immigrants were constantly on the move, and there are few written accounts of their experiences. Most came from poor regions in southern China, driven by hardships and attracted by the promise of gold. Many went into debt to cover travel costs under a credit system.

The credit system worked like this:

1. Australian businessmen paid for Chinese immigrants to sail to Australia.
2. The immigrants received basic needs and a small share of any gold they found until their passage was repaid.
3. They were often dropped off in Robe, South Australia, and had to walk to the goldfields in Victoria.
4. In Ballarat, some were set to work growing food and building mining equipment, while others dug for gold.
5. Once surface gold ran out, many couldn’t repay their debts and were left to survive on their own.

Most Chinese immigrants were far from home and their families, leading to sadness and depression. To cope, they worked hard or spent their free time gazing out to sea, often smoking a pipe for comfort.



Walking from Robe

“Father finds a man to guide us to the goldfields of Ballarat. I ask Father how we will get there. We will walk, as we have always walked, he says.”

— Yong

After Yong and his companions are dropped off in Robe, they are forced to walk to the goldfields in Ballarat, beginning a long journey on foot. Like many Chinese gold seekers at the time, they found themselves in Robe, a small port town in South Australia. When the first Chinese immigrants arrived, the town's population of 200 doubled overnight, eventually growing to 3,000. This rapid increase caused the town, with only a few hotels, banks, shops, churches, and houses, to expand significantly. The Chinese travellers landed at Guichen Bay in Robe and camped on the beach until they could find work and a place to stay. Before heading to the goldfields of Victoria, they hired European guides to show them the way. They would walk about 30 km (or 60 li in Chinese miles) per day, digging wells for freshwater and purchasing sheep for food along the way.

Li Measurement:

A li, often called a Chinese mile, did not represent a fixed distance but varied depending on the terrain. The Chinese character 里 (li) combines the characters for field (田, tián) and earth (土, tǔ), reflecting the distance of a typical village.

As the Chinese travellers made their way through various towns, they left messages for others by inscribing Chinese characters on tree bark. However, some European guides were dishonest, abandoning the travellers after a day or two, leaving them stranded. Despite these challenges, the travellers continued to mark their route, and today, relics such as holy dollars and ginger jars brought from China still bear witness to their journeys.



Arriving in Ballarat

They discover dozens of men in bamboo working the soil, clanking sounds of tools.

At the end of the play, Yong and his companions reach Ballarat and set up camp in the goldfields. While relieved to arrive, they soon faced racism and prejudice from European settlers. The Chinese miners settled in a designated Chinese district in Ballarat, watched over by a Chinese protector. Initially, the camps were made of canvas, but some structures became more permanent over time. Although local newspapers sometimes praised the Chinese for their hard work and discipline, they also faced negative reactions from European miners, especially when gold became scarce.

Chinese miners were generally known to be peaceful and hardworking, but their different appearance, language, and customs made them easy targets for discrimination. This hostility led to violent incidents, such as the Lambing Flat Riots in New South Wales in 1860-61. During these riots, European miners, angry over competition, attacked Chinese miners, burned their tents, destroyed their supplies, and drove them away. On June 30, 1861, a mob of over 2,000 people gathered, shouting "No Chinese!" and violently destroyed a Chinese camp. Some Chinese miners were rounded up, beaten, and had their possessions burned.

These acts of violence were not uncommon and occurred in other areas of New South Wales and Victoria as well. Despite their hard work, Chinese miners often faced discrimination and violence wherever they went. As gold deposits ran out in New South Wales and Victoria and new ones were found in Queensland, the Chinese miners faced similar challenges.



Settling in Australia

“Father, I made it. I finished the journey you started. I finished the journey you wanted. And I made it mine. I have walked. And I have arrived.”

After the play ends, it is suggested that Yong and his companions remain in Australia and build lives here, where they will no doubt make great contributions to Australian society. Within the Chinese goldfield community, many expanded their contributions with new stores, restaurants, teahouses, tailoring services, and by working as herbalists, acupuncturists, interpreters, scribes, and specialized artisans. There were Chinese theatres and, in some locations, a Chinese-operated coach service that ran between goldfield towns. Many women also became independent entrepreneurs during the gold rush, panning for gold as well as establishing successful businesses. Many were economic pioneers who broke the mould of what was considered possible for women.

As gold and other minerals were discovered in Queensland, the Northern Territory, and northeast Tasmania, more Chinese miners followed. Along with the miners came Chinese entrepreneurs who helped provide goods and services for the emerging Chinese population. Chinatowns sprang up across Australia in the major areas where they lived and worked, such as the goldfields. The Chinatowns didn't just offer accommodation for the communities; many businesses opened up there, including eateries, grocery stores, markets, and laundries. The Chinese became the main suppliers of services and products like tea, furniture, silk, and food for the colonies.

From the gold rush to today, the contribution of Chinese people to Australia's social, economic, and cultural development has been enormous.





Classroom Activities

Character Diary

Students will explore the experience of a fictional immigrant arriving in Australia during the gold rush by developing a character and writing from their perspective.

Materials

Background information on the Australian gold rush (1850s–1870s), writing materials (paper, pens, or access to a computer), visual aids or pictures of the Australian goldfields, immigrant life, and working conditions, maps or diagrams of gold mining locations and routes.

Instructions

Provide an overview of the Australian gold rush, focusing on the large-scale immigration it triggered and the diverse range of people who came to Australia in search of fortune. Highlight the difficulties and opportunities faced by immigrants, such as language barriers, living conditions, and competition with other miners.

Instruct students to create a fictional immigrant character who has recently arrived in Australia during the gold rush.

Show students pictures and visual aids of the goldfields, immigrant communities, and working conditions. Encourage them to use these images to imagine what life would have been like for their character, including the physical environment, daily struggles, and social interactions. The diary should include:

- The experience of arriving in Australia and their first impressions
- A description of their work in the goldfields or other roles they might have taken (shopkeeper, worker, cook, etc.)
- Interactions with other immigrants, locals, or family members
- Personal thoughts and emotions, including their hopes, fears, and the hardships they face

Letter Home

Students will explore the experiences and emotions of Yong, by writing a historical letter from the perspective of a someone migrating to Australia during the Gold Rush.

Materials

Background info on the Australian Gold Rush, writing materials, visual aids of the goldfields and immigrants.

Instructions

Briefly introduce the Australian gold rush, focusing on immigrants like Yong and his father. Discuss the hardships they faced: long journeys, rough conditions, and strained relationships. Use visuals to help students imagine Yong's environment.

Students will write a letter to a family member or friend back home. The letter should describe their daily life in the goldfields, emotions (loneliness, frustration, homesickness), their relationship with other there, and the hardships they face.

Students share their letters by reading them aloud or displaying excerpts. Discuss the diverse emotions and experiences portrayed, focusing on empathy for immigrant families during the gold rush.

Reflect on the challenges faced by immigrant families like Yong's and how these experiences shaped their identity and relationships.

Letter Home

Dear Douglas,

It has been three weeks since I left Scotland and I miss you and our sisters very much. Three weeks on this ship has felt like three years and every day drags on and on.

The first week I met lots of interesting people. There is a young girl named Bonnie who is travelling with her father and young brother to Australia to dig for gold, just like us. Bonnie reminds me of our Freya, she is just as adventurous and loves animals. You should see her when a gull lands on the deck and nips at our lunch! She talks of the many different animals she has read about in Australia: kangaroos that jump across a room in one great bound, funny little bear-like creatures called koalas that sleep all day (imagine that!) and giant birds that don't fly but run faster than the speed of light. I think she called them emus.

I am looking forward to reaching dry land and getting off this creaky old ship, not to mention discovering all the amazing things I've heard about in Australia.

Until we speak again,
Stuart

Time Capsule of Reflection

Students will reflect on their understanding of history, empathy, and cultural understanding by writing letters to their future selves, incorporating insights gained from stories like Yong's.

Materials

Writing materials (paper, pens, envelopes), information about Yong's life and journey, a secure container or box for storing sealed envelopes.

Instructions

Begin by discussing the concepts of empathy and cultural understanding. Introduce Yong's life journey and discuss how stories like his can broaden perspectives and promote empathy. Emphasise the significance of reflecting on our understanding of history and its impact on personal growth.

Have students write letters to their future selves, incorporating reflections on empathy, cultural understanding, and the impact of historical narratives. Encourage them to include specific examples or insights from Yong's story that resonated with them. Allow students to decorate or personalise their letters to make them more meaningful.

Instruct students to seal their letters in envelopes. Collect the sealed envelopes and place them in a secure container or box. Discuss the importance of revisiting these letters in the future as a means of self-reflection and personal growth.

Packing for a Long Journey

Students create a visual list of what an imaginary passenger might pack for a long journey across the seas

Materials

Research tools, writing/ drawing materials and/or device.

Research life at sea for immigrants during the nineteenth century and discuss what life was like for passengers on their long journeys to Australia, it is suggested that passengers pack the following items:

- 6 shirts
- 6 stockings (socks)
- 1 pair of shoes
- 1 pair of boots
- 1 warm coat or cloak
- 1 light hat
- 1 warm hat
- 1 mattress, 20 inches by six feet
- 3 pairs of bedsheets
- 2 blankets
- 1 towel
- Tin-pots (for food)
- Lantern
- Baking dishes and saucepan
- Cups and mugs
- knives, forks and spoons
- Mirror, brushes, combs, razors
- Soap
- Candles
- Baking soda and cooking oils
- Washing soda (for clothes, towels and bedsheets)

Create an imaginary character who is migrating from one country to Australia in the nineteenth century. Give this character a name, a profession and a country they are migrating from. Then decide what the character will bring on their sea voyage. You may want to pick items from the list above or come up with your own.

Create a visual list of what your character has packed for their trip. This may be a collection of drawings, a collage or images found online.

Timeline of the Gold Rush

Students will create a visual timeline to demonstrate their understanding of key events related to Chinese contributions during and beyond the Australian gold rush.

Materials

Pictures and descriptions of key events (provided on the next page, out of order), poster boards or large paper, markers, colored pencils, glue.

Instructions

Discuss the importance of timelines and introduce the role of Chinese immigrants in the gold rush and their impact on Australian society.

Students will create a visual timeline showing key events involving Chinese immigrants from the gold rush to their lasting contributions. Divide students into small groups. Each group gets pictures and descriptions of key events from the 1850s onward, including their influence on Chinatowns. Groups will arrange the events in chronological order, adding information or illustrations as needed. Each group presents their timeline, explaining their choices and the significance of the events.

Students write a short reflection on the significance of the events and their impact on both the Chinese community and Australian society. Conclude with a class discussion on the contributions and challenges faced by the Chinese community during and after the gold rush.



1888 – Chinese Immigration Restriction Act

Australian colonies pass laws to further restrict Chinese immigration, a precursor to the White Australia Policy.



1851 – Australian Gold Rush Begins

The discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria attracts immigrants, including many from China, seeking fortune.



1861 – Lambing Flat Riots

Anti-Chinese sentiment reaches a peak with violent riots, resulting in the forced expulsion of Chinese miners from the region.



1901 – Federation and the White Australia Policy

The new federal government enacts the Immigration Restriction Act, formalising the exclusion of non-European immigrants, including Chinese, from entering Australia.



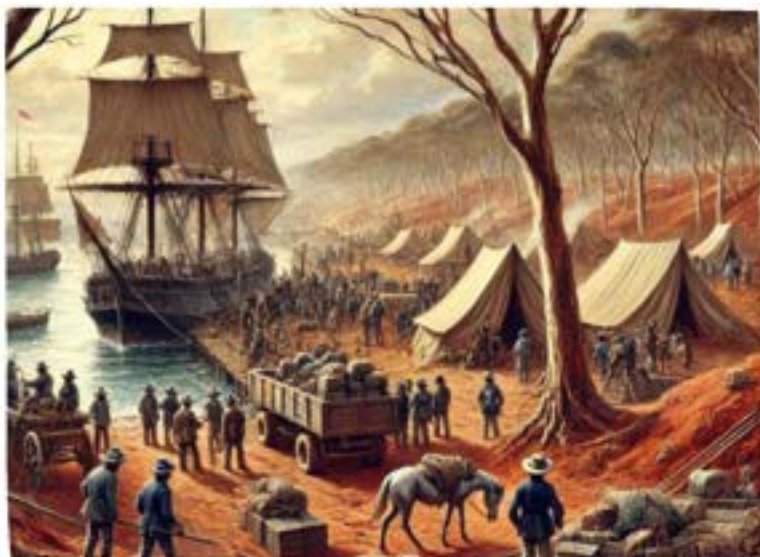
1857 – Chinese Miners Settle in New South Wales

Chinese miners begin moving to the goldfields of New South Wales, notably around Lambing Flat (Young).



1870s – Decline of the Gold Rush

Many Chinese miners remain in Australia, transitioning from gold mining to other industries, including market gardening and storekeeping.



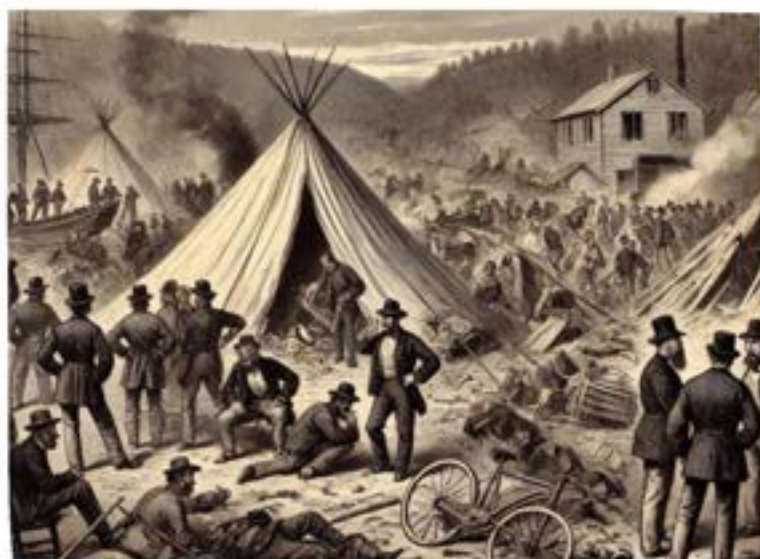
1854 – First Large-Scale Arrival of Immigrants

Chinese miners arrive in significant numbers, primarily in Victoria, to work in the goldfields.



1920s – Chinese Contributions to Australian Society

Despite restrictions, the Chinese community thrives in sectors like agriculture, trade, and retail, contributing to Australia's multicultural society.



1856 – Anti-Chinese Riots at Buckland River

Tensions between European and Chinese miners escalate, resulting in violent clashes and the destruction of Chinese camps in Victoria.



1860s – Establishment of Chinese Camps

As communities grow, Chinese miners begin establishing their own camps, bringing with them cultural practices and contributing to local economies.



1880s – Formation of Chinatowns

Permanent Chinese communities emerge in major cities, such as Melbourne and Sydney, forming Chinatowns that become hubs of cultural and economic activity.



1855 – Victorian Government Imposes Restrictions

A heavy landing tax is placed on Chinese immigrants arriving in Victoria, leading many to enter via South Australia and walk to the goldfields.

Mapping Yong's Journey

Students will map and recreate Yong's journey from Robe to Ballarat, following the route taken by many Chinese travelers during the gold rush.

Materials

Research tools, writing materials, large open space (e.g., playground or hall).

Instructions

Students will begin by researching the towns Yong and other Chinese immigrants passed through on their way to Ballarat. Using this information, they will create a map that clearly illustrates the route. The towns to be included are:

- Guichen Bay
- Penola
- Dergholm
- Casterton
- Coleraine
- Dunkeld
- Ararat (founded by Chinese immigrants)
- Buangor
- Beaufort
- Burrumbeet
- Ballarat

In a large space such as a playground or hall, students will physically map out the journey using materials like chalk, string, or any other available resources. They will mark the towns and include the distances between them. After creating the map, students will follow the marked route, discussing along the way what it might have felt like for Yong and other travelers to make such a long journey on foot. Encourage them to reflect on the physical and emotional challenges of the walk.

Character through Movement

Students will create and explore characters by experimenting with different types of walking and movement.

Materials

Large, open space.

Instructions

Students will explore various ways of walking to develop distinct characters. They will begin by standing, spread out across the space. Each student will imagine a string pulling them from different parts of their body, guiding and exaggerating their movement. For example:

- **Head:** A string pulls them upward from the top of their head, lifting them onto their toes.
- **Nose:** A string pulls them forward from their nose, causing the neck and upper back to lead the rest of the body.
- **Stomach:** A string pulls from their lower stomach, tilting the pelvis forward and curving the lower spine.

As students move, the facilitator will ask questions like:

“What kind of person walks like this? Are they old, young, important, tough, scared, lonely, popular, sick, etc.?”

Students will then pause, meet another student, introduce themselves by their character name, and have a short conversation (e.g., about the weather or where they are going). This process will be repeated until each student has interacted with a few others.

Living Statues

Students will bring statues to life through improvisation, starting from a frozen position and developing short scenes.

Materials

Large, open space.

Instructions

Students will work in small groups (4–5 players) to create statues that serve as the starting positions for improvisation.

The facilitator will provide each group with a scenario and location to base their scene on. Examples of scenarios include:

- A young boy and his father arriving on an Australian shore and meeting locals
- A young boy walking through the Australian bushland and discovering native wildlife
- A young boy and his father setting up camp in the Australian bushland
- A young boy and his father arriving in the gold fields and digging or panning for gold

Team 1 will stand in the performance space while Team 2 moulds each player from Team 1 into a specific starting position, like statues. Once all players are moulded, Team 2 returns to the audience space, and Team 1 begins to bring their statues to life, improvising a short scene based on the given scenario.

Repeat the process with all teams, giving each group a chance to perform and mould their peers into living statues.

Exploring Emotions

Students will explore and express different emotions through facial expressions and physical activity.

Materials

Large, open space.

Instructions

Begin by having students sit in a circle. The facilitator will name an emotion, and Player A will look across the circle to Player B, using their face to express that emotion. The facilitator will then name another emotion, and Player B will look across the circle to Player C, expressing that new emotion with their face. This continues until all players have had a turn.

Next, divide students into small teams (4–5 players). The facilitator will call out a series of emotions in quick succession. Each team will immediately respond by physically creating shapes that depict the called emotions without talking to each other. They will hold each pose until the next emotion is called.

Possible emotions include:

- Love
- Hate
- Fear
- Embarrassment
- Regret
- Suspicion
- Passion
- Bliss
- Grief
- Anger
- Loneliness
- Confidence
- Bitterness
- Bravery

Afterward, bring the group together to discuss the various emotions they explored. Talk about what emotions are, how they affect us, and how different people experience and express them in unique ways.

Building a Ship

Students create the sounds of the ocean and a ship at sea with voices and bodies

Materials

Large, open space.

Instructions

Begin by discussing the role of sound and physical storytelling in creating immersive environments. Introduce the concept of using voices, bodies, and teamwork to construct the soundscape and image of a ship at sea during a storm.

Have students sit in a circle. Each student will take turns adding a sound using their voice or body to represent different elements of a stormy sea. Possible sounds include waves crashing, ship creaking, wind howling, thunder rumbling, or lightning flashing. The group will layer these sounds together, building a full soundscape of a ship caught in a storm.

Divide students into two teams. Team 1 will begin by creating a frozen image of a ship at sea. One student enters the performance space and strikes a pose representing part of the ship (such as a mast, sail, or the ocean waves). Another student will then join in, adding to the frozen image. This process continues until all members of the team have contributed, forming the complete image of the ship and the stormy sea. Once the image is formed, Team 1 will introduce small movements to animate the scene. While Team 1 performs, Team 2 will provide the sound environment from Part 1.

Teams will switch roles, with Team 2 now building their frozen image of the ship at sea. Team 1 will supply the soundscape while Team 2 performs.

End with a class discussion on how sound and movement can transform a simple space into an immersive environment, and emphasize the importance of teamwork in creating a unified performance.

Creating a Play

Students will explore dramatic storytelling by adapting Yong's migration experience into a short play. This activity enhances understanding of Yong's journey, fostering creativity, collaboration, and theatrical skills.

Materials

Background information on Yong and the Australian Gold Rush, writing materials (paper, pens), performance space or area for rehearsing, optional: Simple costumes, props, or set elements.

Instructions

Briefly introduce the key events in Yong, focusing on his migration to Australia with his father during the gold rush. Discuss the elements of a play, such as characters, setting, conflict, and resolution.

Divide students into small groups. Assign each group a specific part of Yong's journey, such as:

- Leaving China
- Arriving in Australia
- Life in the goldfields
- Yong's relationship with his father

Guide students in writing a short play. Emphasise the importance of character development, dialogue, and key events. Encourage creativity, but ensure the story remains true to Yong's experience and the gold rush setting. Discuss the structure of a play: opening, rising action, climax, and resolution.

Each group performs their play for the class. After each performance, discuss the different portrayals of Yong's experience, highlighting the emotional and historical significance of each scene.



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