

Hi,

We are really excited to be working with you on your A Level in Drama and Theatre Studies. To arrive really well prepared for this exciting course we suggest that you complete the tasks below but to dip in and out rather than trying to work through all of them in order (The fun stuff is at the end!):

ANTIGONE

- This is a set text that we study and it would be really useful if you have read it and done some research around it. As it is a play from Ancient Greece there are free copies of the text available online:

<https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Antigone.php>

[https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/SOPHOCLES_ANTIGONE_\(AS08\).PDF](https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/SOPHOCLES_ANTIGONE_(AS08).PDF)

https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/antigone_2.pdf

- In terms of research you should be discovering as much about ancient Greek theatre as possible – the buildings, actors, playwrights, design features and audiences. Also research Sophocles who wrote the play and find out how his life experiences and views are represented in Antigone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeTeK9kvxyo&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtONXALkeh5uisZqrAcPKCee&t=0s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGIQkaolfBI&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtONXALkeh5uisZqrAcPKCee&t=0s>

OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD

If you are accepted to study Drama at A Level with Turton you will be required to purchase the play 'Our Country's Good' by Timberlake Wertenbaker. These can be bought on Amazon – you can usually purchase a second hand copy quite cheaply.

You will study this text with Miss Helmn- should you need any help with this work during this time please feel free to contact me via Microsoft Teams or via email at helmna@turton.uk.com

There is a lot of work here that we will be revisiting but by doing this now, it will ensure that we are in a really strong position to start the course and will also give us more time to practically explore the play when we begin work in September.

Task One:

For each character read the information that you have been given about them. Then highlight the key points. Look at the example below,

Captain Arthur Phillip, RN: The real Arthur Phillip had been called out of retirement to take on the position of Governor of the first fleet to Australia. He is **calm** and **controlled leader**, **contrasting Major Robbie Ross's leadership**. He shows an **obvious patience** and **understanding towards the convicts**, especially **Liz Morden**. Throughout the play **he refers to historical people and situations**, such as famous thespians Garrick and Kemble. He is **intellectual**, **understanding**, and **authoritative**.

Major Robbie Ross, RM:

The real Major Robbie Ross had previously been on the losing side of the American War of Independence. In the play, Ross makes a reference to this, "This is a profligate prison for us all, it's a hellish hole we soldiers have been hauled to because they blame us for losing the war in America." (Act Two, Scene Ten) The fact he feels he is being blamed may account for some of his bitterness. He is a vile, power obsessed man, who intimidates the convicts and believes that the convicts' punishment should be severe. He is completely against the play *The Recruiting Officer* being put on, and constantly ridicules Ralph Clark for it.

Captain David Collins, RM:

Collins was appointed as the colony's judge on arrival at Botany Bay in 1788 and as such, his contribution to conversations at hand are generally from a legal perspective. He approaches subjects with the other officers very logically and justifies all of his comments. He fully supports Ralph's decision to stage a play and conducts a vote amongst the officers to find out who agrees with them. The real David Collins went on to found the first settlement in [Tasmania](#).

Captain Watkin Tench, RM:

Tench is an officer who dislikes all of the convicts for the simple fact that they are convicts. Whenever he has a comment to make about them, it is always a sarcastic aside. He does not believe in the redemption of the convicts, nor in the fact that they can be converted from their criminal ways. He regards all of the convicts as barbarians, stating that hanging is "their favourite form of entertainment" (Act One, Scene Three).

Captain Jemmy Campbell, RM:

A follower of Ross. There is great debate among productions as to his sobriety and while he is often played as drunk, there is nothing ever mentioned in the script to confirm this thought. He tends to copy Ross's views on everything though finds himself amused by the idea of the convicts performing a play.

Reverend Richard Johnson:

The first clergyman in the Australian Penal Colony at Botany Bay, Johnson was to be a moral guide to both the convicts and officers of the camp, but seems more concerned with the play propagating Christian doctrine than any more pressing matters at hand. The Real Reverend Johnson was given a patch of land on which he planted oranges and lemons from Rio de Janeiro. It is said that he sold his 'Farm' for a fair profit when he left the colony.

Lieutenant William Dawes, RM:

The colony's astronomer, who couldn't care less about matters on earth. He agrees to the play if he doesn't have to come and watch it.

Lieutenant George Johnston, RM:

An officer most famed for his "compassion, if not to say passion" (Act One, Scene Six) for the convict women. The real Johnston lived with a convict named Esther Abrahams and later took part in the Rum Rebellion.

Second Lieutenant Ralph Clark:

Ralph is struggling as a lower officer. He desperately wants promotion, and when he hears through Harry Brewer that Arthur Phillip has suggested a play be put on by the convicts, he jumps to set about doing it. You see his transformation in the play as he turns from a man who is extremely nervous and uneasy around women, even ridiculed for not having a women convict for himself on the voyage to Australia, to a man in love with the convict Mary Brenham. He is influenced, to changing his feelings towards the convicts, by Arthur Phillip, giving them respect in the end, apologising to Liz Morden for interrupting her line in a rehearsal. The real Ralph Clark later had a daughter with Mary Brenham, whom he named Betsey Alicia – for his wife in England.

Second Lieutenant William Faddy:

He opposes the play simply because he doesn't like Ralph. His dislike is never really explained, but all of his comments in his only scene (Act One, Scene Six) are sarcastic remarks or even insults directed at Ralph.

Midshipman Harry Brewer:

Harry Brewer is an officer alongside the other army men, but is the lowest of ranks, Midshipman Harry Brewer struggles to find his place. Tormented by the apparent ghost of Handy Baker, a man who he had hanged, and other ghosts, he seeks reassurance in Ralph. Since in Australia, he and convict Duckling Smith have been together. He is a very jealous man, and is always keeping a watchful eye on Duckling, much to her dismay. He dies, with Duckling at his side in despair.

John Arscott:

John Arscott's hopelessness as a convict becomes apparent in Act Two, Scene One. He says, 'There's no escape I tell you.' His utter hopelessness becomes more apparent when it is revealed that his compass he bought from a sailor is actually a piece of paper with 'North' written on it. Depending upon the delivery, this line can be full of humour or full of pathos. He eventually becomes most lost in the play, claiming that he doesn't have to think about reality when he plays Kite, finding a different way of "escape" through the theatre. The real John Arscott never actually tried escaping and got rich enough after his liberation to return to England.

James "Ketch" Freeman:

Transported to Australia for the killing of a sailor who broke a strike, Freeman is made the hangman of the colony when he is told 'hang or be hanged'. Despised by many of the other convicts for being a hangman, in particular Liz Morden, Ketch struggles to be accepted. He exchanges words with Ralph in Act One, Scene Nine. He explains how he came to be in his situation, blaming a mix of reasons including leaving Ireland where his guardian angel was. You see also in this scene his desperation to be an actor in the play.

John Wisehammer:

Transported to Australia for stealing snuff, he continues to claim his innocence. He is Jewish and struggles against slight (Liz) and strong (Ross) anti-semitism. His large knowledge is self-taught and he says of himself that he "like[s] words" (Act One, Scene Ten). He writes a new prologue to the play, which Ralph doesn't want to use on the first night, as he considers it too political. In the end, Wisehammer wants to stay in Australia, as "no one has more of a right than anyone else to call [him] a foreigner" (Act Two, Scene Eleven), and to become an author there. He and Mary Brenham exchange words, literally, in Act One, Scene Ten, where Wisehammer's slight intellectualism is explained. The real Wisehammer would get married and become a merchant after his release.

Black Caesar:

Originally from Madagascar, Caesar wants to join the play and gets the (silent) parts of Worthy's servant and Kite's drummer more or less written for him. Stage fright gets the better of him in the end and he is only made to perform after the most ludicrous threats from his fellow actors. The real John Caesar was described as one of the most troublesome convicts and would be one of the colony's first bushrangers before being killed in 1796.

Robert Sideway:

A London pickpocket, severely punished on the transport ship for insulting an officer, Sideway tries to act as a cultured gentleman in front of Ralph, but keeps falling into cant when upset. He claims to have seen many theatre pieces, but his acting is completely over the top and one of the major sources of humour in the first rehearsal scene, when he accompanies near every word with a gesture. He says that he wants to found a theatre company in the last scene, which, according to the epilogue in Thomas Keneally's novel, the historical Sideway actually did.

Mary Brenham:

A very shy girl, whose love for "A.H." turned her into a thief, she gets as good as dragged to the audition by Dabby Bryant, but is offered a part by Ralph after having heard her read only a few lines. She opens up gradually, but remains slightly naive in comparison to the people around her. She finally falls in love with Ralph and dreams of a future with him. Brenham and Clark would indeed have a daughter, but Clark would leave both of them behind upon returning to England.

Dabby Bryant:

Mary's friend who constantly dreams of returning to Devon. Although she did sell Mary for food on the ship, she obviously cares for her. Although she seems to enjoy the play, she thinks the content and especially her character, Rose, are stupid and argues for a play that is more relevant towards their current situation. In the final scene, she reveals that she has plans for escaping that night. The real Mary Bryant would indeed become famous for a daring escape in 1791.

Duckling Smith:

A young thief and prostitute, sentenced to death at only 18 years of age. Harry Brewer is hopelessly in love with her, a feeling that for a long time does not appear to be mutual. She only admits to loving Harry once he is close to dying and later says that she never told him about her love as she feared he might become cruel towards her. Keneally lists her real name as Ann, but none of the three women named "Ann Smith" on the First Fleet fit her description.

Liz Morden:

One of the most troublesome women, Governor Phillip wants to make an example out of her: through redemption, which is why he wants her in the play. Liz is accused of stealing food, but does not defend herself at her trial. The play makes her care enough about herself to defend herself when given the last chance in Act Two, Scene Ten, where she claims that before, speaking wouldn't have mattered. In Keneally's novel, her name is Nancy Turner. Neither name can be found on the list of First Fleet convicts.

Meg Long:

Nicknamed "Shitty Meg", she acts as a madam for the other women convicts. She has a short but humorous appearance in the audition, where she completely misunderstands Clark's call for women.

An Aboriginal Australian:

He describes the British settler's efforts with curiosity and later with fear. The Aborigine in her play represents ways of seeing; He is an innocent bystander witnessing the arrival of the first fleet with bemusement and wonder the Aborigines struggles to comprehend the arrival of the first fleet in terms and language of the dreamtime: the stories of creation handed down through generations of aboriginal culture.

WATCH LIVE THEATRE

Lots of companies are now sharing recorded live theatre for free:

- Geko have released all of their productions on their YouTube channel – Time of My life is particularly interesting:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PQpxi7h_rc

THEATRE HISTORY

Dip in and out of these recordings about theatre history – they are short and quite witty.

I would recommend the Shakespeare, Epic and Cruel – Theatre of the 1930's and 50's

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtONXALkeh5uisZqrAcPKCee>

BE PRACTICAL ABOUT IT

- Developing physical skills: Vamos Theatre Company specialises in mask work. The physical performance of the actor is important no matter what play you are doing and what style you are working in so why not work through Vamos' tutorials on mask work and refine your physical expression. Create a mask of your own (a paper plate would do!) and practise to the camera on your phone or in front of the mirror.

<https://www.vamostheatre.co.uk/films-and-trailers#filter=.mask-techniques>