

01 CREATING BLACK DIGGERS

Creating Black Diggers Part One

Black Diggers director, Wesley Enoch discusses the creative process behind the production. From the initial development of the play's conception to opening night, Enoch describes the collaborative process involved in shaping the play. Enoch discusses how an idea is transformed through the collaborative process of researching, writing and rehearsing.

Creating Black DiggerS Part Two

Wesley Enoch discusses his role as director. Outlining his creative processes, Enoch communicates his methods surrounding casting and rehearsals.



PRE-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY 1A:

Propoganda

Objective: Experiment with the colloquialisms of Australia in the early 1900s.

1. Read the glossary:
 - a. **brother:** term of endearment in reference to an indigenous man; term of reference to males within a generation often referred to as the kinship circle
 - b. **mob:** can be used as a description of family and/or community
 - c. **gammon:** joking, don't mean it, telling lies
 - d. **bugger me:** a phrase used to express surprise or disbelief
 - e. **picaninny:** a racist slang referring to a person of dark skinned descent
 - f. **full blood:** referring to a person of unmixed ancestry
 - g. **half caste:** referring to a person with mixed ancestry

2. Discuss examples of how terms were used in conversation and in the context in the play.

3.



Listen to the extract to discuss how war was marketed to the public and made appealing.

4. Show students World War One enlistment propoganda. Identify the ways the posters make joining the army appealing.
5. Use these ideas to construct a radio advertisement incorporating some of the vocabulary in the glossary. The objective of the advertisement is to appeal or encourage white Australian or Aboriginal Australians to fight for their country.
6. Improvise, record and present your radio advertisement to an audience.
7. Discuss how language has been used to engage the intended audience.

PRE-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY 1B:

The Events of *Black Diggers*

Objective: Consider the events of the play and their chronology.

1. Provide students (in small groups) with a set of chronology cards
2. Discuss the events outlined on the cards.
3. Arrange the cards in order, predicting the plot of *Black Diggers*.
4. Share the timelines constructed by each group.
5. Discuss the similarities and differences observed in the various timelines.
6. Rearrange the chronology cards to respond to the quote below by director, Wesley Enoch.

"I think a director's job is very much to manipulate the elements of production so the audience are getting as much of it as possible."

7. Discuss how the order of the cards may have changed in response to the quote.



➤ [CLICK HERE TO VIEW CHRONOLOGY CARDS](#)

PRE-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY 1C:

Directing to convey perspective

Objective: Communicate meaning through character physicalisation and reaction (rather than focusing on dialogue).

1. Read the extract from Unit 15.

► [CLICK HERE TO VIEW UNIT 15 – SCRIPT EXCERPT](#)

2. Discuss alternate endings for the scene.

EXAMPLES

- Harry is attacked by the soldiers.
- Aggressive soldier is challenged by a fellow soldier. The outcome of this confrontation is positive.
- The aggressive soldier is attacked by the soldiers.

3. Improvise and rehearse a variety of ways the dramatic action could unfold. Use little or no dialogue to shape the scene.
4. Present the range of alternate endings to an audience.
5. Discuss the directorial decisions. Consider the ending that had the most impact on the audience and why it was effective.



POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 1D:

Evaluating the director's role

Objective: Recall the events of the play and evaluate the success of the play's structure.

1. View the production of *Black Diggers*.
2. Use the chronology cards to recall the order of the events of the play.



View Creating *Black Diggers* Part 1.

4. Select one of the quotes provided which relate to Enoch's vision for the production.
5. Reflect on the performance. Debate whether or not the order of the events of the play achieved Enoch's vision for the production.

QUOTES FROM WESLEY ENOCH

"This production is all about telling a story that is not universally known – telling a story that could change the country."

"One of the challenges as a director is to make sure the audience is taking in all the information."

"I wanted the audience to have an experience of storytelling that took you through a journey of hope and excitement of young men...Took you through to the depths of loss and trauma of facing war and then the power of coming back."

POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 1E: Privileging perspectives

Objective: Explore how choices made as a director can privilege perspective.

1. Discuss (as a class) what it means to privilege a perspective and how the dramatic languages can be manipulate to foreground a character's perspective.
2. Read the scene Unit 24 – Bertie wants to enlist.

► [CLICK HERE TO VIEW UNIT 24 – SCRIPT EXCERPT](#)

3. Identify the perspectives present in the scene.
4. Brainstorm how language was used to indicate perspective.
5. Workshop the scene in small groups. Select one of the character's perspectives to privilege. Experiment with a range of dramatic languages to communicate your intended perspective (focus/meaning).

Options for shaping the scene:

- Perform the scene without dialogue to clarify the visual literacy of the scene.
 - Listen to the scene (as though a radio drama) to hear how attitudes and reactions are communicated through the manipulation of vocal qualities.
 - Allocate a selection of dramatic languages to each group to inform and extend the directorial choices of the scene.
6. Present scenes for feedback and reflection to evaluate the effectiveness of directorial choices in privileging a chosen perspective.

POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 1F: Responding

Objective: Evaluate the success of directional choices in communicating dramatic meaning.

1.



View Creating *Black Diggers* Part 2.

2.



View the extract *Soldiers Play I Spy/Frank's Death*.

3. Select one or two moments of clear dramatic meaning from the extract.
4. Analyse, evaluate and synthesise the extent to which the director has successfully manipulated production elements to expose the audience to the depths of loss and trauma.



02 DESIGNING BLACK DIGGERS

Designing Black Diggers

Director, Wesley Enoch discusses the role of the designer, Stephen Curtis in the *Black Diggers* production. This excerpt explains the close relationship between the designer and the playwright. It examines how decisions may influence the production's purpose. Curtis explains how the focus of the designer is to build opportunities for performance within the space and bring an audience into that experience.



PRE-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 2A: Designing difference

Objective: Communicate role and concept through costume choices.

1. Research one of the iconic figures below:

- a. Eddie Mabo
- b. Julia Gillard
- c. Yothu Yindi
- d. Pauline Hanson
- e. Carlotta
- f. Ian Thorpe
- g. Magda Szubanski

2. Identify what your figure achieved or represents with regards to social change and or equality.

3. Design a costume to represent this iconic figure (role). Decide and design the costume for the opposing group representing the challenge faced by this person.

4. Explain and justify your choices.

PRE-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 2B: Lockdown

Objective: Use an event known to students to connect them to the events within *Black Diggers*.

1. Brief students on the action required in a lockdown situation (as per school protocol).
2. Create a pre-recorded soundtrack (lockdown alarm, silence, sound effects of the intruder).
3. Create a small, enclosed space that participants move into as a class.
4. Observe how students pass the time. Add tension to the situation such as:
 - receiving texts about activity that is happening from other staff.
 - a pre-recorded video from a student in the grade that is sent to a student in the lockdown situation.
5. Ask students to verbalise (or record) their feelings and document their experience on post-it notes to cover the wall.
6. Record a video to your loved ones (possible Making – Creating Task).

POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 2C: Staging at school

Objective: Stage scenes in your environment to communicate meaning.

1. Provide scenes that are well known to the students from *Black Diggers*.
2. Allocate a scene to each group.
3. Challenge students to stage this scene at a location on site which could be used to enhance the meaning of the scene.
4. Experiment with spaces and block the action in the scene.
5. Allow time for students to develop the scene and maximize the location choice.
6. Watch each scene and evaluate the choices of each group as a class. Discuss whether the locations used enhanced the overall design and dramatic meaning and whether these choices would engage teenagers in the content further.

03 RESEARCHING BLACK DIGGERS

Researching Black Diggers

Black Diggers director, Wesley Enoch discusses the integral role of the researcher, David Williams. The job of the researcher is unpacked in the excerpt; delving into the history and informing the choices of the playwright and director to maintain the historical integrity of the work.



PRE-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 3A: War anthems

Objective: Explore themes relevant to war through movement.

1. Research and read the lyrics of war songs from World War One.

EXAMPLES

"Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire" written by soldiers in trenches of the first world war

"Someone Else May Be There While I'm Gone" by Irving Berlin

"Bless 'Em All" by Fred Godfrey

2. Listen to an audio recording of the songs. Discuss the meaning of the lyrics.
3. Create a movement piece that depicts the dramatic action described in the song lyrics.
4. Present the movement piece (accompanied by the war song audio) to an audience.
5. Discuss the meaning of the performance and its impact on the viewer.

PRE-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 3B:

Propaganda; a constructed reality

Objective: Based on iconic war propaganda, contrast the perception and the reality of war.

1. View iconic Australian posters used to encourage men to enlist in the war.
2. Discuss and identify what the government wanted people to value in the 1900s based on these images.
3. Allocate a poster and focus for each small group to discuss:
 - A. Utopian idea of what being in the army is like and develop a short skit or commercial to communicate this
 - B. Reality of being in the army is like and develop a short skit or commercial to communicate this
 - C. Utopian thoughts of what being in the army is like and devising a voice over to communicate these thoughts
 - D. Real thoughts of what being in the army is like and devising a voice over to communicate these thoughts.
4. Allow time for students to devise their work.
5. Watch or listen to each performance.
6. Reflect on these performances and discuss the differences between the perspectives and why the propaganda was necessary.
7. Discuss what the posters would be like if they were realistic and what slogans would be used.

POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 3C: Gaps and silences; the unwritten truth

Objective: Juxtapose reality with the censored perception of war.

1. View and discuss the two contrasting extracts Unit 13 and Unit 36.



Unit 13 Dear Auntie May #1



Unit 36 - Bertie writes to his mother 1917

2. Research letters written by Australian soldiers to their families during World War One.
3. Discuss the content of the correspondence. Consider what the soldiers say and what is left unsaid.
4. Select a letter to workshop for performance.
5. In small groups, nominate one member to play the role of the letter writer – they read the letter aloud. All other members of the group, improvise the untold thoughts and events experienced by the letter writer.
6. Create a performance that intersperses the reading of the letter with devised dramatic action depicting untold thoughts and events experienced by the writer.
7. Present the performance for discussion.

POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

ACTIVITY 3D: Experiencing injustice

Objective: Encourage a deeper understanding of injustice.

1. Ask students to line up outside the classroom in alphabetical order and remain in this formation for the duration of the activity.
2. Explain (as teacher-in-role) you are recruiting for the war and need to assess the suitability of all applicants. Explain that successful applicants will be offered a prize beyond their wildest dreams.

EXAMPLES

- Financial freedom
- Sponsorship of their choice
- Celebrity status

Teacher may consider a material prize that appeals to the participants to present to the successful applicants. Announce that there is a checklist of criteria and although everyone is keen; all will not be successful at having the honour of representing this great country.

3. Demand students enter the space in single file for you to check and assess them on appearance (make notes on a notepad).
4. Explain that fitness and passion for representing the country is at the forefront of the selection criteria.

POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

5. Complete the recruitment application form. As teacher in role, announce that decisions made by the recruiter are final and no feedback or further discussion is possible. Ask students to complete details on the below Recruitment Application Form.
Also ask students to:
 - Run on the spot for 30 seconds
 - Do 30 star jumps
 - Perform four push ups.

6. Ask each student to step forward as their name is called. Clarify their application. Question each student based on Australian knowledge (taking notes on each student) with a range of questions such as:
 - What is the constellation on the Australian flag called?
 - What is the National Anthem called?
 - Spell vegemite.
 - Is Australia part of the Commonwealth?
 - Who is the current Prime Minister?
 - Is Arnotts still an Australian company?
 - Name an iconic Australian food.
 - Recite the second verse of the National Anthem.
 - What is Uluru also known as?
 - What is the current ruling government?
 - Name the capital city of Tasmania.
 - How many states are in Australia?
 - How many territories are in Australia?
 - Spell Adelaide backwards.
 - Name a sport Australia is known for?
 - What state is the Great Barrier Reef in?
 - How many people are on a cricket team?

7. Announce the names of unsuccessful applicants (based on the recruiter checklist) and congratulate those who have been successful. Have all applicants exit the room in alphabetical order to conclude.

8. Reflect on the process and discuss how participants felt. Discuss the criteria used for recruiting and whether this was equitable.
 - How did you feel when you were not successful?
 - How did you feel when you saw the criteria?
 - Compare and contrast your experience with the treatment and recruitment process of Aboriginal Australians during World War One.
 - Is this injustice still relevant today?

POST-SHOW LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Recruitment Application Form

Name _____

Ancestry (country of origin) _____

Occupation of parent/s _____

Write one sentence to explain why you should be selected for this opportunity.

Recruiter Checklist

Successful applicants cannot:

- wear glasses
- have braces
- be taller than the teacher
- smile too much
- have knobby knees
- be too skinny
- no blonde hair
- look like they will cause trouble.

04 THE STORY OF DOUGLAS GRANT

Researcher David Williams introduces the story of Aboriginal serviceman Douglas Grant. Who was taken into care by a white family after his family was massacred in far north Queensland.

Williams uncovered records verifying Grant's involvement in the war and his experience as a prisoner of war. Medical records revealed Grant's declining health and the loss he experienced as a result of being displaced between white and Aboriginal culture.



ACTIVITY 4A:
Discussing Douglas Grant

Objective: Examine the life events of Douglas Grant.

1. Research the life of Douglas Grant.
2. Identify the significant events of Grant's life.
3. Select one of the events to explore.
4. Construct a Y Chart (looks like/sounds like/feels like) which examines the event from Grant's perspective.
5. Use this information to devise a performance.

EXAMPLES

- soundscape
- monologue
- duologue
- freeze frames



ACTIVITY 4B:

Research extension topics

Objective: Explore Aboriginal stories and issues from a range of sources.

Research and discuss issues that have impacted Aboriginal Australian such as:

Stolen generation and displacement

The Rabbits by John Marsden and Shaun Tan (book)

Rabbit Proof Fence (film)

Mathinna: Nursery by Bangarra Dance Theatre (Filmed dance work)

Honouring and supporting our Aboriginal servicemen

[The Australian War Memorial: Indigenous defence service](#)

[Barani: Douglas Grant](#)

[The Sydney Morning Herald: Forgotten in the line of fire](#)

[The Sydney Morning Herald: Our black history](#)

Aboriginal Stories

The Sapphires (film)

Mabo (film)

Ten Canoes (film)

Namatjira by Scott Rankin (play)

The 7 Stages of Grieving by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman (play)

No Sugar by Jack Davis (play)

The Secret River by Kate Grenville An adaptation for the stage by Andrew Bovell (play)

Mick and
Archie get off
the boat

Norm, Bob and
Ernie try
to enlist

Mick kills
five Germans

Norm, Bob and
Ernie read
rejection forms

Harry & mate
watch the
recruitment
parade

White Soldier
realises Ernie
is Aboriginal

Norm, Bob and
Ernie try to
enlist a
second time

Nigel is
taken POW

Bertie watches
Tommy get
buried alive

Bertie is
discharged

Archie gets
turned away
from RSL

Nigel in
nursing home

Ernie
talks about
Nightmares

Harry begs
for money on
the street

Bertie writes
to his mother

Bob, Norm
and Ernie in
hospital with
disabilities

Nigel talks
to Indian POW

Archie kills
Austrian
soldier in a
fight

Unit 15 Aggressive Soldier gets beaten up (Gallipoli)

As he prays the dead rise up and prepare tables. Lights change and everyone is eating

AGGRESSIVE PRIVATE What d'you think you're doing?

HARRY Same as you. I'm sitting and I'm eating my grub and I'm staying out of trouble.

AGGRESSIVE PRIVATE I don't know what the hell's going on any more.

HARRY The world's turned upside down.

AGGRESSIVE PRIVATE You've said a mouthful there. Upside down when a coon thinks it's alright to sit and look me in the eye and touch the same metal plate and finger the same spoon and drink the same bloody water as a white man. I don't know who you are boy but you've got gumption. And you know what they say about boys with gumption don't you? They get shown their place.

WHITE PRIVATE Ease up Jim.

ANOTHER WHITE PRIVATE Leave it.

HARRY I've done nothing to get your back up.

AGGRESSIVE PRIVATE You being here gets my back up. Now are you gonna back away boy?

HARRY No. No, I'm not.

AGGRESSIVE PRIVATE FELLERS WE'VE GOT A BLOKE HERE WHO NEEDS TO BE SHOWN WHAT'S WHAT!

TALL PRIVATE Yeah. We have.

The soldiers pile on the AGGRESSIVE PRIVATE and beat him up. He comes out of it bloodied and bruised.

RED-HAIRED SERGEANT What's he saying?

HARRY "The world turned upside fucking down"

Unit 24 (Bertie wants to enlist 1917 Frying Pan Creek NSW)

The tension is broken by the sound of chopping wood. Slowly the scene dissolves into the darkness and comes up on a woman doing the work. Her son.

MUM And what good will that do?

BERTIE If you say I was born in eighteen ninety eight they'll say righto.

MUM But you weren't.

BERTIE No, but if you say, I mean if you write it down they reckon that'll do 'cos there are no other records, no-one would know.

MUM And if I do say you were born then what will happen? Will the sky suddenly stay blue all year? Will I get a new hat?

BERTIE But you'll get me out of yer hair.

MUM You're a boy. No letter will change that. You've barely seen the sun rise. Your muscles fail after an hour's work. And you reckon you can waltz around with all the white boys do you? That they'll make life easy for you, suddenly you're their dearest little black mate. Suddenly you'll be a man, and a white one at that? That doors will open for you? Do you?

BERTIE You know what, mum? Yeah, I do. Something like that.

Enter Grandad

GRANDAD What's he rabbiting on about?

MUM Bertie here wants to join up.

GRANDAD Join up what?

BERTIE The army. Earn money. See the world. Fight for country.

GRANDAD We've been fighting for country for a long time.

BERTIE Yeah well if Kaiser Bill comes over the ridge and the bosh start spearing us all on their spike things then we'll really know what it is to fight for country.

MUM Whose been putting this stuff in your head? You been hanging around outside the School of Arts again?

GRANDAD You know, my grandfather, he could walk for three days, follow the sun this time of year. How many fences did he have to cross? How many gates did he have to shut?

BERTIE None. You've told me and told me, pop, I know. Now it's all fences, we're fenced, I know. But this isn't just about us. It's about... a bigger world.

GRANDAD Bigger world never seemed interested in you. Why you so interested in it?

BERTIE Ever since I was small you said we were fighters. Long time ago, we would be men. You know, men, the old people, move through the bush, silent, stand up. Everyone look at them. All that palarver.

MUM What's palarver? Speak the King's English.

BERTIE I'm going to be a fighter too. For us but not just for us. For Australia.

GRANDAD Australia. Never heard of it. You, Dor?

MUM Think the coppers like to talk about it. Must be a magic fairy land somewhere with oak trees and shepherds pie. Don't see much Australia round here.

BERTIE Will yer write the letter or won't you?

GRANDAD Don't look at me, you know I can't write nothing.

MUM You know what, I will write it. I'll say you were born in eighteen ninety eight out at Walter's Run. I'll do what you want. But I'll tell you something right now. You know when the Narrandera Show's on? And for a week the whole racecourse down there feels like every story book has come to life? And you and your sister would go and hang around, lounging on the barbed wire like a pair of skinned rats, looking in? How'd you feel? Like a big fancy circus, a big show of light and excitement, eh, and you could never get in? Would never get in? That's what the world's like, son. You can go to the Tower of London or the Pyramids or wherever, it's still the world. And you won't be allowed through the wire.

BERTIE They need me. They need lads. For the first time, they need us. Changed the rules, make it easier for aborigines they reckon.

GRANDAD Think about why that might be.

MUM And you know when the Show's over each year, when you go down the grounds the next week, what's there?

BERTIE Nothing. Nobody.

MUM That's what this war will be like for you. There's no fancy land at the end.

BERTIE So you'll write it anyway.

MUM Imagine if I don't. You'll only run away to god knows where. I'm lookin' in your eyes Bertie. I've already lost you. Maybe this way there might be someone decent who'll look out for you. What're you laughing at Dad?

GRANDAD Someone decent. All these blokes, you're going off to lick their boots. Same blokes, same boots that have kicked us for years. And you can't wait.

BERTIE Sorry Pop. I really am. But I'll stay standing.

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**100
YEARS OF
ANZAC** **THE SPIRIT
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2014 - 2018**



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