

English & Drama: Bringing Figures to Life

Madame Tussauds Sydney — Schools Resource

NSW Syllabus: English K–10 (2022) + Drama 7–10 (2023) | **Stage:** Stage 4 (Years 7–8)

About this resource

This resource combines textual analysis and dramatic performance, using Madame Tussauds Sydney figures as a springboard for writing and devising monologues that bring a historical or cultural figure's inner voice to life.

Curriculum outcomes addressed

- EN4-URA-01 — analyses how meaning is created through language forms, features and structures
- EN4-ECA-01 — uses processes of planning, monitoring, revising and reflecting to compose imaginative, informative and persuasive texts
- Devises and performs drama to embody character, voice and perspective

Key inquiry question

How can writers and performers use voice, language and perspective to represent a real person's inner world?

Exercise 1: Finding a Voice (Classroom - Pre-Visit)

Format: Classroom-based | 25 minutes

1. Read a short published monologue or speech extract as a class (teacher's choice) and identify techniques used to create a distinct voice — tone, rhythm, word choice, repetition.
2. In pairs, discuss: what's the difference between writing about someone and writing as someone?
3. Brainstorm a list of famous figures students would be interested in "voicing."

Exercise 2: Character Study (Excursion - In-Venue)

Format: Excursion based | Individual worksheet

Choose one figure from the gallery to study closely.

1. Record their pose, expression and setting. What mood or attitude do these suggest?
2. Imagine this figure could speak in this exact moment. What might their tone of voice be — proud, nervous, defiant, playful?
3. Draft three lines of dialogue this figure might say, staying true to what you've observed.

Exercise 3: Write and Perform a Monologue (Classroom - Post-Visit)

Format: Classroom based | Extended task, 1–2 lessons

1. Using your notes from the excursion, write a 150–200-word monologue in the first person from your chosen figure's perspective, set at a defining moment in their life or career.
2. Use specific language techniques (imagery, repetition, rhetorical questions) to build voice and tone.
3. Rehearse and perform your monologue for the class, focusing on vocal tone, pace and physicality to match the character you've written.

Madame Tussauds

Exercise 1: Finding a Voice (Classroom - Pre-visit)

A monologue is a speech delivered by one character that reveals their thoughts, feelings and perspective. Writers use specific language techniques to create a distinct voice that sounds authentic to that character. In this exercise, you will analyse how published writers craft voice before creating your own. Pay close attention to tone, rhythm and word choice as you read and respond.

Part A: Analysing Voice

Read the monologue or speech extract provided by your teacher. As you read, identify the techniques the writer uses to create voice.

1. What is the tone of this monologue? (e.g., angry, reflective, humorous, desperate)

2. List three specific language techniques you notice (e.g., repetition, rhetorical questions, imagery, short sentences):

Technique:	
Technique:	
Technique:	

3. Choose one sentence or phrase that you think strongly reveals the character's voice. Write it below and explain why it's effective:

Part B: Pair Discussion

Discuss with your partner: What's the difference between writing about someone and writing as someone?

Part C: Brainstorm

List famous figures (historical, sporting, entertainment) you would be interested in 'voicing' in a monologue:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

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Exercise 2: Character Study (Excursion - In-venue)

When we observe someone closely - their posture, facial expression, clothing and surroundings - we can make inferences about their personality, mood and story. At Madame Tussauds, each figure has been carefully posed and styled to capture a specific moment or aspect of their identity. In this exercise, you will use close observation skills to understand a figure before giving them a voice. This is the foundation of character-based writing and performance.

Choose ONE figure from the Madame Tussauds gallery to study closely. Complete all sections below.

Part A: Observation

Name of figure you have chosen: _____

Describe their pose (body position, gesture, stance):

Describe their facial expression (eyes, mouth, overall mood):

Describe their setting or costume (what surrounds them, what they're wearing):

Part B: Interpretation

Based on what you've observed, what mood or attitude does this figure suggest? (e.g., confident, thoughtful, celebratory, serious)

What moment in their life or career might this pose represent?

Part C: Finding Their Voice

Imagine this figure could speak in this exact moment. What tone of voice would they use?

- ☐ Proud
- ☐ Nervous
- ☐ Defiant
- ☐ Playful
- ☐ Reflective
- ☐ Determined
- ☐ Humorous
- ☐ Other: _____

Draft three lines of dialogue this figure might say, staying true to what you've observed:

1.

2.

3.

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Exercise 3: Write and Perform a Monologue (Classroom - Post-visit)

A monologue is most powerful when it captures a defining moment - a point of decision, triumph, doubt or transformation. Using the observations and character notes from the excursion, students will now write a first-person monologue that brings their chosen figure's inner voice to life. The goal is to use specific language techniques to create an authentic voice that reveals the character's thoughts and feelings. This monologue will then be performed, combining writing skills with dramatic performance.

Part A: Planning Your Monologue

Which figure from Madame Tussauds are you writing about?

What defining moment in their life or career will your monologue be set in? (e.g., before a big performance, after winning an award, making a difficult decision)

What is the main emotion or attitude your character feels in this moment?

List 3 language techniques you will use to build voice and tone (e.g., imagery, repetition, rhetorical questions, short sentences, metaphor):

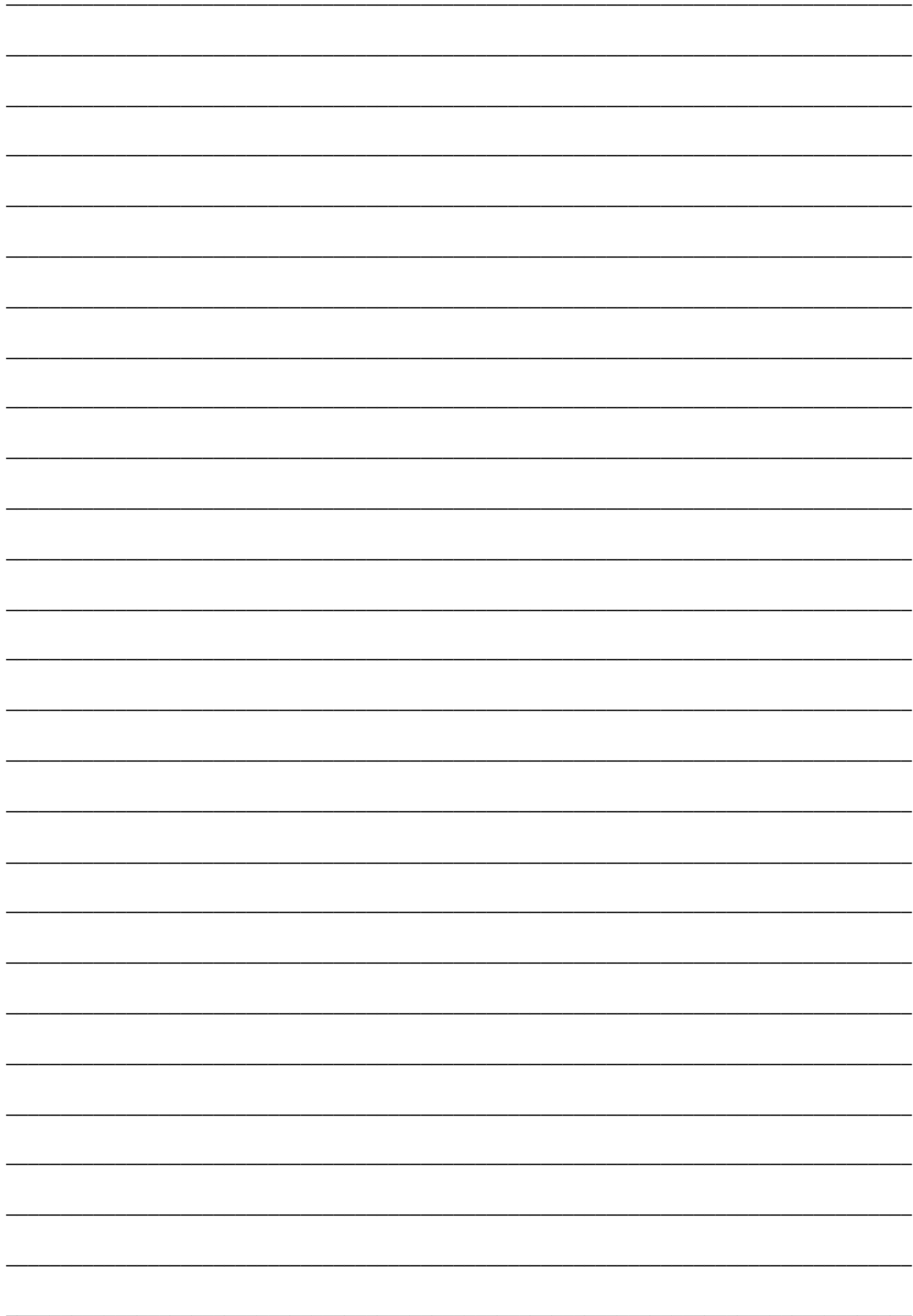
1.

2.

3.

Part B: Write Your Monologue

Write a 150-200 word monologue in the first person from your chosen figure's perspective. Use the space below or attach additional pages if needed.



Part C: Performance Planning

Before performing, plan how you will use your voice and body to bring the character to life.

Vocal tone and pace: How will you use your voice? (e.g., slow and thoughtful, fast and excited, loud and commanding)

Physicality: What gestures, posture or movements will you use to match your character?

Key moment: Which line or moment in your monologue is most important? How will you emphasise it?

Reflection (complete after performance)

What worked well in your performance?

What would you do differently next time?

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