

Using written texts

Sometimes a drama class begins with a close examination of a written text. The literacy levels in the class will partly determine the choice of text type, and how it is used. In Early Stage 1 the class may begin with the spoken word, (for example the reading of a picture book or nursery rhyme) whilst older more experienced students could base their drama on poems, short stories or extracts from the newspaper. Picture books, where communication depends on the combination of picture and words, may be used in younger classes. In Stage 3 a play script might be explored.

	Extracts from picture books
Early Stage 1	Read <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> . Adopt the low status role of one of the characters who has woken after 100 years. Ask the students (in high status roles as experts in 21st century living) to explain the unusual things seen in this modern world (e.g. a big chopping machine in the sky. <i>What is that called?</i>).
Stage 1	Read <i>Rosie's Walk</i> by Pat Hutchins. Discuss with the students what is happening (in the subtext, in pictures only) to the fox following her. Have the students form a circle, with joined hands. Have one student adopt the role of Rosie, and one the fox. Whilst the teacher re-reads the text, "Rosie" winds in and out of the circle. The students use their joined arms to allow Rosie to escape appropriately - "over, under, around, past, through". However they raise their arms or move their bodies to block the fox. Repeat the process several times with several students acting as Rosie and the fox.
Stage 2	Read the <i>Great Bear</i> by Libby Gleeson and Armin Greder. Stop at the section describing the bear performing: <i>She lifted her feet and swayed to the sound and some of the crowd clapped and cheered.</i> <i>Others poked her with sticks and threw stones at her ragged coat.</i> In small groups create still images of this crowd mix. Tap in to hear the thoughts of each person watching the bear.
Stage 3	Read <i>The Great Bear</i> by Libby Gleere and discuss the whole story. Write an in-role description by an animal welfare officer of the condition of the bear. Follow this by a hotseating: the teacher takes on the role of the owner of the bear after the bear's escape, and answers questions put by the welfare officers.