



Education Resources Pre-Production

Sydney Theatre Company and Goldman Sachs JBWere in association with Bell Shakespeare present

UNCLE VANYA

Written by Anton Chekhov, in a new adaptation by Andrew Upton
Directed by Tamás Ascher



PRE-PRODUCTION RESOURCES

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KEY



AIM of exercise or section



Extension Exercises



Download and watch



Drama Exercises



English Exercises



Play online

Uncle Vanya

Sydney Theatre Company Education Resources 2010

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ABOUT STCED

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ABOUT BELL SHAKESPEARE

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CREATIVE TEAM

Written by Anton Chekhov, in a new adaptation by Andrew Upton

Director Tamás Ascher

Set Designer Zsolt Khell

Costume Designer Gyorgyi Szakacs

Lighting Designer Nick Schlieper

Composer/Sound Designer Paul Charlier

Associate Director Marion Potts

Cast

UNCLE VANYA, Richard Roxburgh (Ivan Petrovich Voinitsky [Vanya], Mariya's son & Sonya's uncle)

PROFESSOR SEREBRYAKOV, John Bell (Aleksandr Vladimirovich Serebryakov, a retired professor)

YELENA, Cate Blanchett , (His wife, aged twenty-seven)

ASTROV, Hugo Weaving (Mikhail Lvovich Astrov, a doctor)

SONYA, Hayley McElhinney, (Sofya Aleksandrovna [Sonya], the Professor's daughter from his first wife)

MARIYA, Sandy Gore, (Mariya Vasilievna Voinitskaia, mother of the professor's first wife)

TELEGIN, Anthony Phelan, (Ilya Ilich Telegin, an impoverished landowner)

FARMHAND, Andrew Tighe

MARINA, Jacki Weaver (a nanny)

The action takes place on the Serebryakov's country estate.

ACT 1 – A Garden. Part of a house with a verandah can be seen. In the pathway leading to the house, a table has been laid for tea under an old poplar. There are benches and chairs. On one bench lies a guitar. Not far from the table is a swing. It is around 3 o'clock in the afternoon. A storm is brewing. *From Uncle Vanya a new version by David Lan for Royal Shakespeare Company, first performed 1998*

The garden in the family estate of Serebryakov. Astrov and Marina discuss how old he has grown, and how he feels bored with his life as a country doctor. Vanya enters, yawning from a nap, the three complain about how all order has been disrupted since the professor and his wife, Yelena, arrived and nobody is working. As they're talking, Serebryakov, Yelena, Sonya, and Telegin return from a walk. Vanya calls the professor "a learned old dried mackerel," criticizing him for his pomposity and the smallness of his achievements. Vanya's mother, Mariya Vasilyevna, who idolizes Serebryakov, objects to her son's derogatory comments. Vanya also praises the professor's wife, Yelena, for her beauty, arguing that faithfulness to an old man like Serebryakov means silencing youth and emotions — an immoral waste of vitality. Astrov is forced to depart to attend a patient, but not before delivering a speech on the preservation of trees, a subject he is very passionate about. Act I closes with Yelena becoming exasperated as Vanya declares his love for her.

ACT 2 – The dining room in Serebryakov's house. Night. A watchman can be heard tapping in the garden. In front of an open window Serebryakov sits and dozes. Yelena sits beside him also dozing. *From Uncle Vanya a new version by David Lan for Royal Shakespeare Company, first performed 1998*

Serebryakov's dining room, several days later. It is late at night. Before going to bed, Serebryakov complains of being in pain and of old age. Astrov arrives, having been sent for by Sonya, but the professor refuses to see him. After Serebryakov is asleep, Yelena and Vanya talk. She speaks of the discord in the house, and Vanya speaks of dashed hopes. He feels he's misspent his youth, and he associates his unrequited love for Yelena with the devastation of his life. Yelena refuses to listen. Alone, Vanya questions why he did not fall in love with Yelena when he first met her ten years before, when it would have been possible for the two to have married and had a happy life together. At that time, Vanya believed in Serebryakov's greatness and loved him; now those beliefs are gone and his life feels empty. As Vanya agonizes over his past, Astrov returns, the worse for drink, and the two talk together. Sonya chides Vanya for his drinking, and responds pragmatically to his reflections on the futility of a wasted life, pointing out that only work is truly fulfilling.

Outside, a storm is gathering and Astrov talks with Sonya about the suffocating atmosphere in the house; Astrov says Serebryakov is difficult, Vanya is a hypochondriac, and Yelena is charming but idle. He laments that it's a long time since he loved anyone. Sonya begs Astrov to stop drinking, telling him he is beautiful and should create rather than simply destroying himself. The two discuss love, during which it becomes clear that Sonya is in love with the Doctor and that he is unaware of her feelings.

When the doctor leaves, Yelena enters and makes peace with Sonya, after an apparently long period of mutual anger and antagonism. Trying to resolve their past difficulties, Yelena reassures Sonya that she had strong feelings for her father when she married him, though the love proved false. The two women converse at cross purposes, with Yelena confessing her unhappiness and Sonya gushing about the doctor's virtues. In a happy mood, Sonya leaves to ask the professor if Yelena may play the piano. Sonya returns with his negative answer, which quickly dampens the mood.

ACT 3 – The drawing room in Serebryakov's house. There are three doors: on the right, on the left and in the centre. It is daytime. *From Uncle Vanya a new version by David Lan for Royal Shakespeare Company, first performed 1998*

Vanya, Sonya, and Yelena are in the living room of Serebryakov's house, having been called there by Serebryakov. Vanya calls Yelena a water nymph and urges her, once again, to break free. Sonya complains to Yelena that she has loved Astrov for six years and that because she is not beautiful, he doesn't notice her. Yelena volunteers to question Astrov and find out if he's in love with Sonya. Sonya is pleased, but before agreeing she wonders whether uncertainty is better because then, at least, there is hope.

When Yelena asks Astrov about his feelings for Sonya, he says he has none and concludes that Yelena has brought up the subject of love to encourage him to confess his own emotions for her. Astrov kisses Yelena, and Vanya witnesses the embrace. Upset, Yelena begs Vanya to use his influence so that she and the professor can leave immediately. Before Serebryakov can make his announcement, Yelena conveys to Sonya the message that Astrov doesn't love her.

Serebryakov proposes that he solve the family's financial problems by selling the estate, using the proceeds to invest in interest-bearing paper and buy a villa for himself and Yelena in Finland. Angrily, Vanya asks where he, Sonya, and his mother would live. He protests that the estate belongs to Sonya and that Vanya has never been appreciated for the self-sacrifice it took to rid the property of debt. As Vanya's anger mounts, he begins to rave against the professor, blaming him for the failure of his life, wildly claiming that without Serebryakov to stop him, he could have been a second Schopenhauer or Dostoevsky. In despair, he cries out to his mother, but instead of comforting her son, Mariya insists that Vanya listen to the professor. Serebryakov insults Vanya, who storms out of the room. Yelena begs to be taken away from the country and Sonya pleads with her father on Vanya's behalf. Serebryakov exits to confront Vanya further. A shot is heard from offstage and Serebryakov returns, being chased by Vanya,

who is wielding a loaded pistol. He fires the pistol again, point blank at the professor, but misses. He throws it down in disgust and sinks into a chair.

ACT 4 – Voinitsky’s (Vanya’s) room. This is both his bedroom and the office of the estate. By the window is a table covered with account books and papers of many kinds. A writing desk, shelves, scales...

Astrov’s table is smaller than Voinitsky’s. on it lie drawing and painting materials. Nearby is a portfolio. A starling in a cage. On the wall a map of Africa, of no obvious use. A huge sofa upholstered in oilcloth. On the left a door leading to other rooms. On the right a door into the hallway. In front of the right-hand door a mat, laid to prevent the peasants dirtying the floor. Telegin and Marina sit opposite each other winding wool for socks.

From Uncle Vanya a new version by David Lan for Royal Shakespeare Company, first performed 1998

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SONYA:

I am just as unhappy as you are, maybe, but I don’t despair.

”

As the final act opens, a few hours later, Marina and Telegin wind wool and discuss the planned departure of Serebryakov and Yelena. When Vanya and Astrov enter, Astrov says that in this district only he and Vanya were “decent, cultured men” and that ten years of “narrow-minded life” have made them vulgar. Vanya has stolen a vial of Astrov’s morphine, presumably to commit suicide; Sonya and Astrov beg him to return the narcotic, which he eventually does.

Yelena and Serebryakov bid everyone farewell. When Yelena says goodbye to Astrov, she admits to having been carried away by him, embraces him, and takes one of his pencils as a souvenir. Serebryakov and Vanya make their peace, agreeing all will be as it was before. Once the outsiders have departed, Sonya and Vanya pay bills, Mariya reads a pamphlet, and Marina knits. Vanya complains of the heaviness of his heart, and Sonya speaks of living, working, and the rewards of the afterlife: “We’ll hear the angels, we shall see the sky inlaid with sapphires, we’ll see all the evils of this world, all our sufferings drenched in a great flow of gentleness that will overrun the earth; our life will be so calm, so sweet, like a caress. . . . You’ve tasted no happiness in your life but wait, wait, Uncle Vanya, just wait...We’ll rest so cosily. (She embraces him.) We’ll stretch out our bones, we’ll relax our muscles and rest.”

THEMES

Family, country life, Idleness Breeds Discontent and Unrest, (weakness), Regret for Roads not Taken, (Delusion), The wasted life, Loss, Despair, Resentment, Hope, Love (unrequited), optimism, desire, failure, rivalry

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HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY



Most of the principal characters—in particular, Vanya—are bored by their failure to take part in productive activity. This boredom leads to brooding, petulance, grumbling, quarreling, and finally to Vanya's crazed gun attack. Although Chekhov refrains from moralizing and outrightly stating his theme, one can conclude that *Uncle Vanya* is an attack on the idle provincial life of the upper classes in czarist Russia. A daring interpreter of the play may go further, deciding that the estate where the play is set is a microcosm representing a world in which upper classes—for want

of something better to do—foment social unrest, upheaval, and war.

Many of the characters wonder about the opportunities they missed because of their complacency. They too often accept their lot in life without making attempts to better themselves.

Vanya lashes out at the professor for his lack of appreciation of Vanya's hard work in keeping up the estate and the farm. After expressing his displeasure, Vanya gets a pistol and shoots at the professor.

Stanislavski

There is no question that Konstantin Stanislavsky played an important role in Chekhov's success, and Stanislavsky's acting technique, now generally known as "the method," had an enormous impact on twentieth century theatre. Yet it must be noted that Chekhov and Stanislavsky were often at odds; the playwright thought that his director took the plays much too seriously, and added too many "realistic" details in the form of obtrusive sound effects and stage business. Until the day he died, Chekhov sought to have his plays staged in a lighter, sparer style. No doubt he would be surprised to see how frequently his work is produced a century later, amused at the wide range of styles, from sombre, reverential readings through silly attempts at deconstruction, and pleased by the many wonderful productions in between.



www.quotidiantheatre.org/chekhov.htm

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VANYA

Chekhov found his plays' true expression in working with the Moscow-born Stanislavski, who undertook to direct his works for the innovative Moscow Art Theatre. Stanislavski's eye for subtext and psychological realism brought out the subtleties of Chekhov's texts. The Moscow Art Theatre went on to commission four of Chekhov's plays; *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

Stanislavski said of Chekhov: "Chekhov often expressed his thought not in speeches but in pauses or between the lines or in replies consisting of a single word... the characters often feel and think things not expressed in the lines they speak."

Stanislavski's revolutionary form of theatre directing - known as the 'Stanislavski System' - lent Chekhov's characters the air of brooding repression which they embody. Stanislavski trained his actors to convey strong emotions such as passion and pain in a controlled and partially-detached manner - a technique picked up later on by the American 'Method' actors of the 1930s and 1940s. At the time of the staging of *The Seagull* in 1898 his method was deemed as a groundbreaking form of directing.

Read more: <http://method.vtheatre.net/stanislavsky.html>

http://european-literature.suite101.com/article.cfm/russian_dramatic_greats_chekhov_stanislavski#ixzz0twOFBrFj



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AIM: To explore the creation of a character through improvisation.



FAMILY PORTRAITS

1) Create a posed family portrait adding one character at a time based on the character descriptions.

Create scenarios around the relationships each portrait variation indicates – interpret the scenario.

2) Develop your own family tree based on the relationships as indicated earlier



CHARACTER MOULDING

Teams of four review the character poses as they are demonstrated on the promotional poster.

Each player stands in a position assumed from the poster.

Justifying the stance and facial expression the pairs or fours animate an improvisation based on the relationships evidence



TRAGEDY and COMEDY

Create a scenario and brief monologue of a really sad story – present to the class

Now re-tell your story as an upbeat version. How can this be attained? – try clowning

Direct each other with various suggestions of style and manner

Discuss

1. Which version was the more interesting?
2. Try a number of styles and techniques that change your story telling style



AIM: To explore the how subtext can be used to reveal hidden truths.



TELL A STORY – which is more credible?

Players in threes exit the playing space and briefly share a story from their past – eg. A misadventure on a family holiday.

The trio return and each tells the identical story (either entering one at a time or standing facing the audience and awaiting their turn.)

Listening for clues and cues the audience must then decide together or separately which story teller was the original story owner.

DISCUSS

Which story was the more believable?

Why? Did it have to do with content, context or manner of presentation?

Discuss truth and subtlety in what we say and what we really mean behind the words



WRITING LETTERS

Create various scenarios for a character in love - eg the situation of an unrequited love with someone you work closely. At this stage it need only be bare bones.

Write a letter wherein you hide the true intention layering it with subtext.

Place the sample letters in a box.

Players enter the space, each take turns selecting a letter to 'perform'.

EXTENSION

Another box holds the 'truth' or 'subtext' – select one (class has written these)

Play the scene with both the subtle letter and the new subtext ploy.



PUBLICITY and IMAGES

Read the synopsis.



Take the story to a new location and time.

Develop a new poster for the play.

Use the existing portraits perhaps and now supplement them with cartoon style thought bubbles.

What are they saying to each other – thinking about each other

Find some new images to reveal the characters – think about what gesture, costume, pose all say about the characters

RESEARCH other settings and locations based on the ‘farm’ – what images can be found to investigate these?



AIM: To develop students' awareness of the important role of characterisation.



Hot seating

Take turns being each of the characters in the play



Question the character about her/his likes, dislikes, experiences, childhood feelings, reactions, to broaden understanding and information about the character. Questions should not be too threatening or confronting and should require more than a 'yes/no' answer.



Alter ego

Select monologues or dialogues from the script to explore the 'real' person beneath the character and the subtext. **One person** plays the role, saying the real dialogue and pausing after each line or sentence. **A second person** stands behind the actor as the 'alter ego' and says what the character is really thinking. (This exercise is explained very clearly on page 34 in Wendy Michael's book, *Played Upon a Stage*).



Post scenes

Create scenes that might occur after the play, either immediately or at a later time.

Characters are put into a position where they meet after the action—next day, 10 years later—where they recall the events for a grandchild.



Imagine now the characters find themselves in the situation where they discuss the final event of the play.

Ask characters to reminisce about the decisions they made.



Interviews

Run interviews of characters by persons relevant to their status in a play.

For example:

- **the working class** or **students** about their reactions to an event (or events) in the play
- a **lawyer** or another **doctor** about the actions or decisions in the play
- **journalists** or **towns people** researching events of the past
- **descendants** interested in family history.





Freeze frames

Illustrate the key moments in a **freeze frame** of a scene or act:

- re-tell the plot
- revise key moments of scenes/act/plot.



Out scenes

Scenes which are not part of the “seen” action of the play but are referred to by one or more characters during the course of the play.

For example:

- The opening scene with Marina recalling her first meeting the doctor, Astrov.
- Vanya referring to Serebryakov’s success with women, and
- Sonya referring to missed opportunities with the doctor.

Can you find more?



In scenes

Part of the scripted action but can be **explored further** by improvisation to **enhance** the dramatic action.

Find out more about the motivations of the characters.

Change the setting to a different place or period.

Replay the scene using gibberish and concentrating on action, tone, expression.

Replay the scene using only mime.

Replay the scene using only movement to appropriate music.



Off stage events

Create the events that occur off-stage during the course of the play, and

- affect the scene that is occurring in a particular way, e.g. characters react, the mood is changed, tension is added (or broken)



- affect the audience’s perceptions of the events.

Consider what would happen if these events didn’t occur. Improvise the possibilities. Consider what happened to make it all happen in the first place.



AIM: To gain a clear understanding of the relationships between the characters in Uncle Vanya (you will need a copy of the text)



Compile the Serebryakov and Voinitsky family tree.

Consult the Tree Builder 4.0 format:

www.myheritage.com/family-tree-builder?gclid=CMuHmcv8r54CFU8wpAodnzB9lw

Include

Aleksandr Valdimirovich Serebryakov: a retired professor.

Yelena Andreevna: wife of Serebryakov, aged 27.

Sofya Aleksandrovna {Sonya}: the daughter of Serebryakov from his first marriage.

Mariya Vasilievna Voinitskaia: Her maternal grandmother - Mother of the professor's first wife.

Ivan Petrovich Voinitsky {Vanya}: her son and Sonya's uncle.

Mikhail Lvovich Astrov: A doctor.

Ilya Ilich Telegin: an impoverished landowner.

Marina: nanny.



Build up psychological profiles of each character to include with their entry on their family tree.

Compile three quotes by each of the characters, to gain an understanding of their perspective.

Include three quotes said about each of the characters, to gain an understanding of their position in the eyes of the others characters.

(Material reproduced from the August: Osage County teachers' notes)



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How Funny is Uncle Vanya?



AIM: To realise the humour that is inherent in Chekhov's plays



What is funny?

Write down some of the jokes, comedy situations or incidents you have found funny, then try to **explain why** you found these things funny.



Read out your explanations, identifying similarities or patterns in what others say about what is funny.

Discuss these observations as a whole class.

Types of humour

Sources of humour include:

- something unexpected happens
- someone says something unexpected
- something terrible happens to someone else
- something embarrassing happens to someone else
- someone does something silly, awkward or clumsy

Select one comic moment in *Uncle Vanya*. **Discuss** how the humour is operating in terms of the above ideas. **Work in groups** then share with the rest of the class. **Note** similarities and differences in interpretation.



Techniques for creating humour

Select a scene from the play that you found particularly funny and **discuss** it in terms of the following notions:



- play on words
- slapstick / physical humour
- humour that breaks down taboos
- humour that deals with fear or intolerance

Write a dialogue script between two or more characters based on this particular form of humour.



The Audience

Together discusses the following questions.



- Would all age groups and all groups in society find this play funny?
- Would some groups find it funnier than others?
- What are some examples in the play indicating that the humour is aimed at a particular group?
- What groups might disapprove of the humour or not 'get' the humour?



EXTENSION

Are there topics which certain age groups, or other groups in society, are likely to find funny?

List groups and try to **identify** topics they might find funny. **Consider** what types of humour and techniques for creating humour are most likely to appeal to your age group, students in middle primary school and your parents' generation.



Essay ideas

- Chekhov's late plays are known for blending the tragic and comic. Discuss one instance in which he does so in *Uncle Vanya*. What theatrical devices make this combination possible?
- Chekhov is known for his use of the pause in dialogue. How is this used theatrically? Choose two or three pauses in *Uncle Vanya* and discuss their effects.
- *Uncle Vanya* is renowned for its pseudo-climax. Consider the effect of dispensing with a more conventional climax in the context of this play. Pay attention to staging and theatrical devices, and relevance to theme and character.

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Bentley, Eric. "Craftmanship in *Uncle Vanya*. In *Anton Chekhov's Plays*. Ed. Eugene Bristow. New York: W.W. Norton and Co. 1977. 349–368.
- *The Birth of Modern Theater: Chekhov's Uncle Vanya in Perspective*. Videocassette. Films for the Humanities, 1975.
- Bordinat, Philip. "Dramatic Structure in Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*". In *Slavic and East European Journal*. Vol.16. 1958. 195–210.
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1 SparkNotes Editors. "SparkNote on Uncle Vanya." SparkNotes LLC. n.d.. <http://www.sparknotes.com/drama/unclevanya/> (accessed September 29, 2010).



AIM: To further appreciate the Stanislavsky System and the theories behind it.

Method Acting



Method acting is the endeavour to apply natural rules and laws to the theatre which can aid an actor with the process of playing a role.



This approach, characterized by any specific or technical approach to acting, is usually the antithesis of cliché, unrealistic, and so-called "rubber-stamp" acting. Depending on the exact version taught by the numerous directors and teachers who claim to propagate the fundamentals of this technique, the process can include various ideologies and practices such as the extremely notable "what if", "substitution", and "emotional memory".

The modern movement often called method acting is also often referred to as "the Stanislavski System" after Konstantin Stanislavski who pioneered the ideas in his teachings, writings, and acting. His most influential books are the autobiography *My Life in Art*, and his trilogy of books set in a fictionalized acting school as a pretence for his own teachings, "An Actor Prepares", "Building A Character", and "Creating a Role". [Wikipedia] <http://method.vtheatre.net/intro.html>



Workshop

Select a scene from the play or an external scenario and improvise it in small acting groups (stay away from the actual script)

Consider finding the **truth** in each scenes key moment. Improvise to develop a key moment and then re-direct the scene to highlight this.

Attempt to replay the scene using various styles and forms. (melodrama, commedia, mime, absurdist, expressionist, and others of your own choosing)

What is the impact on the truth in the scene?

The System

The System uses a balance between an actor's personal experience and an attempt to imagine being in their character's situation. The actors could not merely rely on observation and imitation, they had to emotionally feel the role of their characters and recognise themselves in it, not just think of the part but also live it. Stanislavski stressed importantly that no part of his three-part system take precedence over another part, as this would create an imbalance. All aspects of The System must systematically engage together. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A5133151>

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Character

Select a character from the play and re-write a monologue whereby you reveal only the subtext and perform this.

Record all your movements and emotional reveals (note or film)

Now play the original monologue utilizing all the movements and emotional truths but now with the original text. Sonya's dialogue with Yelena is good for this exercise.



WARM-UP activity

In the manner of...

Choose an ordinary activity to do that you can repeat easily. Eg. Walk into a room and sit on a chair. Make the bed. Make a simple drink.

Rehearse this activity so you know the order of events.

Come back together as a group in a circle. Each player will present their activity in turn. One player whispers to the player next to them a style or 'manner' in which they must do their activity and the rest of the group must guess it. (examples: with great sadness / humbly / envious / Shakespearean / in slapstick style / etc etc)

Discuss how the different 'manner' added to the meaning and **intention** of the performer.



Research and discussion



- Is the discontent on the estate worked by Vanya intended as example of what was happening all over Russia the time?
- Are there any characters in the play who are content with life as it is?
- Which character (or characters) do you admire or feel sympathy for?
- Which character is the least admirable?
- Is Vanya more upset with himself or more upset with the egotistical professor?
- Is the professor more upset with himself or with the people around him?
- Sonya, who works hard to maintain the failing estate, seems a commendable young lady. Why does Dr. Astrov reject her? Why doesn't she strike out on her own?
- Why do you think Dr. Astrov rejects her? Because of her looks compared with Yelena's?
- Did Vanya really mean to murder the professor, or did he deliberately botch the attempt?
- Why does Vanya's mother side with the professor during the argument provoking Vanya to shoot at the professor?
- In an expository essay, describe what life was like on a farm estate in czarist Russia of the 19th Century?



Improvisation

Pick one circumstance/scene and the characters involved; in the class you may find smaller groupings more appropriate (2s or 3s perhaps)

Devise a short (no more than 2 minute) scene without words that explores this emotional situation.

Consider

1. Who are you?
2. Where are you?
3. What are you doing?
4. What is your relationship with the other characters in the scene?
5. What is your back-story?

Dramaturgy

1. Can you now layer an appropriate text / dialogue exchange to build the scene and support its 'truth'
2. Begin by adding very few, but necessary words, that support meaning?

What happens? Discuss? Use such a task in all your approaches to playbuilding.



AIM: To develop students' awareness of the construction of visual images.



Research- extend your understanding of the play you can:

Read about historical events referred to in the play

Read about events that were occurring in the world at the time the play was set (1890s)

Find pictures of houses, clothes, vehicles, tools and equipment

Listen to the music of the time

Research the social values of the time— restrictions, beliefs, morals, and ethics

Find out about the philosophies of the time.



Students learn how to view visual texts with critical understanding and appreciation.

Understanding 'Representation', 'Presentation', 'Narrative' and 'Composition'.

Representation



Select one notion / theme or idea from UNCLE VANYA

Brainstorm with the class OR in small groups a list of what **images** might represent these ideas and **themes**



Sketch or source images from the discussion, alternatively take some photos of your own.

Composing visual images is like composing a song, putting all of the bits together, working out how the pieces are placed in relationship to each other and to the viewer.

Develop together a framework for examining the composition of an image /your chosen image

Position: Who or what holds the centre of attention in the picture? How does the position help make this the centre of attention? How does the background contribute to the ideas you get from the photograph/image?

Proximity (*who is near whom*):

How are people placed in relationship to each other and to objects in the photograph? What is suggested by the placements? Respect? Affection? Conflict? Unity?

Eyelines: Where are people looking? At the viewer? At each other? At something out of frame? What do the eyelines suggest about what is considered important?

Posture: What do the postures and gestures of the people in the photographs suggest?

Expressions: What do the expressions reveal? Is this meant to be seen as a happy moment? A serious occasion?

Rani Haywood refers to a **'KEY' image and look** – what is that for this play? Research and find images from the Sydney Theatre website

INTERVIEW

Interview with Rani Haywood, Marketing Manager at STC

1. What is your job here at the Sydney Theatre Company?

Marketing Manager

2. How did you obtain this job?

Prior to this job, I had worked in marketing at many different arts organisations including Sydney Festival, Edinburgh Film Festival, Company B and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. I saw the job ad for STC and applied!

3. What are the stages in developing publicity material?

In consultation with the Artistic Directors and the director of the production, we develop a key image and look for each production. We then discuss target market for the specific production and develop a campaign to reach this target market. Campaigns include production of collateral (flyers, posters, etc), direct mail campaigns, advertising in press, online and sometimes radio, cinema and TV. We also do a lot of work targeting organisations to reach their email lists or mail lists with ticket offers or just info about a show.

4. How much artistic freedom do you have or what constraints would be on you?

All of our artwork must fit into STC brand guidelines, and as mentioned above we work with the director to ensure we are accurately representing their show.

The Chosen Audience



Discuss who might be the target market for the play now that you have seen it.

How does the play concern a contemporary audience? **What** choices has the director made to assist in that relevance?



This is a new adaptation / translation, **how** can you tell?

What could you do to **update the scenario**? **Work** in small groups or pairs to devise a modern day version of the play – consider **setting** (*is the farms isolation important to the story?*)

characters (*is the nature of family and familial obligation still an important reference?*)



Set design

In teams you are the **designers** for the next production of Uncle Vanya:

- **sketch** a set that is in keeping with the period, country and style of the play
- **sketch** a non-realistic set and considering how this will affect the action, the concept, the effect on the audience
- **sketch** the way the set would have to change for
 - a proscenium arch stage
 - a thrust stage
 - an arena stage
 - theatre-in-the-round.



Publicity

Design posters to be distributed around the school and in neighbouring schools and shopping centres



Design a publicity fax to be sent to neighbouring schools and local newspapers

Prepare the layout of the program, including cover, background information and contents

Arrange interviews and publicity shots with local newspapers

Organise ticket sales and front-of-house administration.