

Sydney Theatre Company and Qantas present

PYGMALION

By George Bernard Shaw



PRE-PRODUCTION RESOURCES

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Education Resource written by Kerreen Ely-Harper and compiled by Education Coordinator Toni Murphy

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AIM of exercise or section



Extension Exercises



Download and watch



Drama Exercises



English Exercises



Play online

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ABOUT SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

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ABOUT STCED

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CREATIVE TEAM

Director – Peter Evans

Set Designer – Robert Cousins

Costume Designer – Mel Page

Lighting Designer – Damien Cooper

Composer – Alan John

Sound Designer – Steve Francis

CAST

Henry Higgins – Marco Chiappi

Eliza Doolittle – Andrea Demetriades

Mrs Eynsford Hill – Vanessa Downing

Clara Eynsford Hill – Harriet Dyer

AV Designer – Sean Bacon

Dramaturg – Toby Schmitz

Colonel Pickering – Kim Gyngell

Mrs Higgins – Wendy Hughes

Freddy Eynsford Hill – Tom Stokes

Mr Doolittle – David Woods



THEMES

Language & Voice

Identity & Inclusion

Gender

Social Relations & Society

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St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, London

A wet summer's evening

A mother and her daughter dressed in evening dresses shelter in the rain, waiting for her son, Freddy, to return with a taxi. They chastise him for returning without one and send him out again. In his haste Freddy collides with a flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, also seeking refuge from the rain. Eliza refers to him by name, alerting his mother to want to know how she knows her son. Eliza says she didn't know it was her son and asks for compensation for the flowers he has ruined.

Taking advantage of the growing crowd Eliza tries to sell a flower to a military gentleman. Refusing the flower for lack of change he instead offers her half-a-crown. A bystander warns her to be careful, drawing attention to a suspicious looking man taking notes of her conversation. Fearing he might be a police officer, Eliza declares herself innocent of all wrong doing. The note taker reveals himself to be Henry Higgins, Professor of Phonetics. Higgins tells her to shut up and stop her carryings on. He makes a bet that in three months he can turn Eliza into a duchess or get her a job as a lady maid or shop assistant by teaching her how to speak 'better English'.

The military gentleman introduces himself to Higgins as Colonel Pickering, author of Spoken Sanskrit. Knowing of each other's work they decide to go to dinner. Eliza attempts again for a flower sale to secure herself a night's lodging. Pickering's insistent claim he has no change (when he'd just offered her a half-crown) causes her to throw her basket down in despair. In sympathy Higgins throws her a generous amount of money. She picks up the coins and is delighted.

Freddy returns to find his mother and sister have left. Eliza takes his taxi and asks the driver to take her to Buckingham Palace to impress Freddy. When out of sight, she asks the driver to take her to her real home in Drury Lane.

Home alone, Eliza sits and counts her day's takings, dreaming and planning her future.

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The following morning

Eliza arrives at Professor Higgins's house asking for speech lessons. His housekeeper Mrs Pearce challenges his making light of Eliza's request and reminds him of his responsibilities in looking after her welfare and questions whether the Professor is really serious about teaching her. Pickering concurs with her. Higgins's arrogance and rudeness lead Eliza to threaten to leave. But he entices her to stay with chocolates and the promise of new clothes agreeing to take her for six months on a live in basis. In return she must learn "how to speak beautifully" and "do whatever you're told".

While having a bath under the supervision of Mrs Pearce, Eliza's father, Arthur shows up demanding his daughter be returned to him. Mr Doolittle asks for money in exchange for Eliza. Higgins doubles the amount but Doolittle refuses, saying he'll return another time. Eliza is unimpressed saying he only wants the money for alcohol.

Her father gone, Eliza begins her first lesson in pronouncing the alphabet.

Three months later

The House of Mrs Higgins

The Professor pays a visit to his mother asking her to meet with Eliza for her first public test. They are interrupted by Mrs Eynsford Hill and her daughter Clara and son, Freddy. Eliza arrives exquisitely dressed speaking her new found speech. She has been instructed to speak on two topics, the weather and health. As soon as the conversation on her aunt's influenza starts she gradually slips back into her natural candid way of speaking but now with perfect diction. Higgins explains to the others, Eliza is speaking the "new small talk". On her way out Freddy asks will she be walking, to which she replies "not bloody likely". Mrs Eynsford is shocked while Clara is bemused by it. Freddy is taken with Eliza and is keen to see her again. When they all leave Higgins asks his mother whether she thinks Eliza is ready for public presentation. She says she is not, while under his tutorage. Higgins defends his work. But his mother challenges him with a new problem, "what is to be done with her afterwards"?

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Six Month Mark

Ambassador's Embassy

Eliza performs impeccably in front of the guests at the Ambassador's Embassy ball. A former Hungarian student of Higgins, Nepommuck, is convinced Eliza is a Hungarian Princess.

Eliza, tired and uncomfortable with all the attention she's getting, asks if they can leave.

Higgins Laboratory

Higgins declares to Pickering he's won his bet but has found the whole process boring. Eliza remains aloof as they talk about her as if she wasn't there. Her frustrations build to cracking point when she throws Higgins's slippers at him. Despairing about her future, Higgins shows little sympathy accusing her of being ungrateful and silly. When she gives him back a ring he gave her he throws it into the fireplace in an outrage and leaves.

Eliza changes from her evening dress into her walking clothes. Before leaving she takes a moment to regard her appearance in the mirror. Stepping onto the street she runs into Freddy who has now become besotted with her. They embrace and take a taxi into the night.

The following morning

Mrs Higgins House

Higgins has called the police to find Eliza. When he asks his mother for advice, she tells him to give Eliza up. Arthur Doolittle arrives dressed in a wedding suit complaining he has now become a member of the middle-class. Having inherited three thousand pounds a year to lecture for an American philanthropist's 'Wannafellar Moral Reform League', he now has to wear a suit and tie and is always bothered by people asking for money and worst of all he is going to marry his girlfriend.

Mrs Higgins suggests to Higgins that this now means Eliza will have a financially secure future. Higgins and Doolittle argue over who should take responsibility for Eliza when Mrs Higgins reveals she has been upstairs the whole time. Mrs Higgins tells her son she will only let him see her if he behaves himself. Mrs Higgins supervises Higgins meeting with Eliza. Eliza cleverly turns the tables as she converses with Pickering speaking about Higgins as if he weren't there, infuriating him.

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Doolittle re-appears on his way to his wedding much to Eliza's annoyance. Pickering asks her to forgive Higgins and come back. Eliza and Higgins become embroiled in an intense exchange about their relationship. No longer afraid of Higgins she tells him she is to marry Freddy and become a teacher of phonetics. Higgins likes Eliza's new found strength but she will have no more of him. Having attended to his request for cheese and ham she walks out the door, leaving him laughing about her choice of husband.

Consider

Higgins is Eliza's creator.

Shaw is a forensic observer of human behaviour.

Eliza undergoes an identity crisis

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HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY

A writer of comedy with a tragic cry in his soul

Ludwig Lewisohn

The 'Old Victorian' In A Modernist World

Born in 1856 George Bernard Shaw described himself ironically as 'an old Victorian'. Living between two centuries Shaw's career traces the transition from the old world order to the new. Victorian culture emphasized absolutism and clear divisions between the human and nature. Victorians believed everything had its place and divisions were necessary in maintaining social order – savage and civilized, good and bad, low and upper class.

On the death of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) power was transferred to her son, Edward VII marking the end of Victorian era. The Edwardian period saw the transition from dominantly Victorian values to the rise of modernism and socialist ideas and philosophies. Modernism challenged Victorian economic and social practices presenting them as greedy, divisive, opponents of freedom, self-realization and social justice.

Written in 1912 *Pygmalion* can be seen to mark the shift from Victorianism to Modernism in its portrayal of a young woman's transformation from a cockney flower girl into a duchess who is mistaken for a Hungarian princess. *Pygmalion* heralded a new age of social awareness about the class divide.

Shaw challenged the Victorian idea that the human being is a stable, inherently noble and unchanging entity. He was interested in the growing advancements in technology, studies in evolution (specifically eugenics) and sociology and their influence on ways of thinking about selfhood and identity as flexible and unstable.

Shaw converted to socialism in the 1880s'. A member of the Fabian Society, which advocated reform rather than revolution, Shaw believed that money was a way to have social mobility and redress inequities between social groups. In his *Sixteen Self Sketches* (1949) he wrote it is 'sufficient equality of income [that] . . . will break down class segregation'.

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Irish born Shaw considered himself an outsider. His mother left his father for her voice teacher when Shaw was a teenager. He struggled at school and took a job as a clerk before starting a career in journalism. Shaw did not attend university and was self-educated. Despite his outspoken criticism of the education system he remained faithful to his belief in the transformative power of education and the importance of independent learning.

Shaw was a prolific writer and essayist, public speaker, journalist, playwright, debater. He wrote detailed stage directions in his play texts with the intention of people being able to read them as they would a novel. He wrote literary plays, which emphasized the expression and debate of ideas through written and spoken language. His writings were certainly didactic and an unashamed vehicle for his political ideas and beliefs. 'Shavian' was to become the term commonly used to refer to the style, tone and the socialist attitudes expressed in Shaw's works.

Shaw's career was not without controversy. His support of the Germans in the First World War and comments admiring of Mussolini and Hitler prior to the outbreak of World War II were deemed offensive and against the British national interest. Recent academic critiquing of Shaw has been more forgiving than his contemporaries with a growing consensus that his comments were not intended to condone social harm but meant as ironic and witty criticisms of the British status quo.

Phonetics & Social Reform

Novelist George Gissing described the fate of the typical working class girl in his novel *New Grub Street* (1891):

The London work-girl is rarely capable of raising herself, or being raised, to a place in life above that to which she was born; she cannot learn how to stand and sit and move like a woman bred to refinement, any more than she can fashion her tongue to graceful speech.

Shaw's *Pygmalion* took George Gissing's hypotheses of the English working class girl as inherently incapable of changing her social circumstances and proved it wrong.

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Shaw advocated for the science of phonetics and the value of nurturance to improve a person's social status and economic prospects. Unlike Gissing's work-girl, Shaw's Eliza demonstrates she is very capable of 'raising herself' to become 'a woman bred to refinement' who can speak the 'graceful speech' of the British upper classes.

Higgins is based on the real phonetician, Henry Sweet, an expert in phonetics and known personally by Shaw. In 1877 Sweet wrote:

When a firm control of pronunciation has thus been acquired, provincialisms and vulgarisms will at last be eliminated and some of the most important barriers between the different classes of society will thus be abolished.

Higgins says pronunciation is 'the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul'. *Pygmalion* critiques the British class divide and the social disadvantages associated with the cockney accent.

The play is a revision of Ovid's story 'Pygmalion and the Statue' in the epic poem *Metamorphoses*. Pygmalion was a sculptor who falls in love with a female sculpture he has carved. He prays to the goddess of love, Venus, to bring his sculpture to life. Venus grants him his wish and on kissing the female statue she miraculously transforms into living human form.

Shaw's version of the Pygmalion tale replaces the physical transformation (from stone to flesh) as the principal site of change to the voice with the linguistic transformation of Eliza's cockney accent to an aristocratic one. Eliza's voice and pronunciation rather than her physical appearance become the true indicators of her transition from one social class to another.

Shaw's interest is not on how Eliza looks but how she sounds. Higgins' proposes to change Eliza's social and economic circumstances by changing the way she speaks.

In the play's Preface Shaw writes 'It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him'. A person's accent in British society even

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today is perceived to signify their socio-economic class of origin. While Shaw observed that differences of enunciations were deemed an indicator of different incomes he and his followers fervently challenged the notion that a person's social status could be defined by their social class.

As Higgins' tells Eliza:

The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another.

Christian Conversion Narrative & Middle-Class Morality

Shaw was writing at a time when there was a new form of 'metropolitan evangelicalism' emerging, paralleling developments in science (such as Darwinism), technology, growth of the middle-class and social reform movements.

The evangelist conversion narrative involved a performance where a 'miracle' occurred that signified 'a moment when God intervened in a demonstrateable way'. For example, the bolt of lightning that occurs when Eliza collides with Freddy is Shaw's staging of the divine 'sign' that had become popular in the conversion novels of the 1800's.

The contrasting of 'before' and 'after' was analogous of the evangelical transformation from 'an initial state of abject sin to one of joyful salvation in Jesus' and for the evangelist's was meant to evoke a response such as moral enlightenment, money, publicity. The photographing of London's poor (particularly children) 'before' and 'after' they had been given assistance became one of the principle means philanthropic and charitable organizations were able to demonstrate the success of their work and on the basis by which they sought funding.

In the late 1800 and early 1900's the differences between religious and secular, traditional and scientific ideas and philosophies were fiercely debated. One of the questions posed at the time was who was the *true* philanthropist and who wasn't? Shaw has Arthur Doolittle ask the

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question “What is middle-class morality?” to Higgins as they debate how much he should be paid to stay away from Eliza. Doolittle becomes Shaw’s vehicle to discuss bigger social questions about class, money and morality.

In the conversion narrative moral elevation could be achieved through a physical elevation. Shaw pursued his interest in the relationship between the divine/God and human/scientific in many of his play texts - *Major Barbra*, *St Joan*, *Androcles and the Lion*. In our contemporary secular societies these debates can be seen to be enacted in reality TV ‘make-over’ programs. However, today’s audiences are less interested in questions of spiritual conversion but still retain a fascination with physical transformation.

Consider

- If we can change our voices we can change ourselves.
- *Pygmalion* is both a socialist parable and social comedy of manners.
- Once a guttersnipe, always a guttersnipe.

References

Pygmalion’s wordplay: the postmodern Shaw , Jean Renyolds, 1999

Shaw, subjective inequality, and the social meanings of language in Pygmalion
Lynda Mugglestone, 1993

The Vulgarisms and Improprieties of the English Language, W. H. Savage, 1833

Modernism – A Working Definition Catherine Lavender 2000

Dr. Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions': Photography, Sexuality, and the Ragged Child in Victorian London," Radical History Review, Seth Koven, 1997

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Additional Resources

Film Texts & Adaptations



Pygmalion 1938 (for which Shaw won an Academy Award for his screen adaptation)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5v_FpvfjVo

My Fair Lady 1964
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVmU3iANbgk>

Educating Rita 1983
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smKTxgQp8S0>

She's All That 1999
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZSfAc38amM>

Comparative Film Texts on themes of inclusion, identity, voice and language

Born Yesterday 1950

The Miracle Worker 1962
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOlrnq8f-y0>

The King's Speech 2010
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzI4D6dyp_o

Comparative & Literary Source Texts

Visible Speech Alexander Melville Bell, 1866

Metamorphosis Ovid, Book 10 'Pygmalion and the Statue'

Frankenstein Mary Shelley

Cinderella

Beauty & The Beast

Image Texts



'Through the lens: the photographic world of George Bernard Shaw' The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) now holds over 5,000 photographs from Shaw's own collection, many of which are now available online <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/home.aspx>
See 'Putting on plays and films' for production photographs of *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*
http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/shaw/page_8.aspx

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Reviews of Productions Then & Now

Article on the first production of *Pygmalion* in April 11, 1914 in which Shaw was involved in the rehearsals. By Samantha Ellis, The Guardian, 2004.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2004/feb/11/theatre>

Review of recent production Garrick Theatre, London, in The Guardian, by Michael Billington, 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2011/may/26/pygmalion-review>

Books & Journal Articles

Pygmalion's wordplay: the postmodern Shaw, Jean Renyolds, 1999

Nobel Prize For Literature, 1925

Presentation Speech on Shaw by Per Hallström, Chairman of the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy, December 10, 1926 Nobelprize.org

Interviews

Movietune First Appearance of Shaw in America (parodies Mussolini)

<http://rgraf.hubpages.com/hub/George-Bernard-Shaw>

Make-Over Reality Television Shows

Extreme Make-Over

Queer Eye For The Straight Guy

Ladette to Lady

Distinctive Australian Voices on Television & Film

At Home With Julia

Kath & Kim

Summer Heights High

Crocodile Dundee

Bazza McKenzie

Dame Edna Everidge

The Australian Fabian Society

<http://www.fabian.org.au/1.asp>

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AIM: To understand and examine the transformation narrative in *Pygmalion*.

Names, Places & Classes



List all the place names in the script.

Collect images for the specific places mentioned.

Compare & Contrast the London of the early 1900's with the London of now.

What is a half-crown, florin, half-sovereign, a pound?

What would be the equivalent value of these currencies in Australian currency today?

“

I avoid plots like the plague.

George Bernard Shaw

”



One of the features of British society represented in *Pygmalion* is a sharp social division based on the class system.

Research the origins of the English class system.

List the three main class divisions in English society.

Drawing on your research notes

Write a short piece on what would life have been for someone of the lower classes living in London in the early 1900's.



Extensions:

What is your understanding of the term 'underclass'?

Do we have a class system in Australia?

Which social and economic class group do you belong to?



The Transformation Myth Narrative

Transformation narratives can be found in Greek mythology and early Christian writings.

Research a Greek myth dealing with transformation.

Choose your own OR one from the list provided:

Niobe (turned into a stone)

Danae & Zeus (golden rain)

Daphne (a laurel tree)

Europa (bull)

Io (cow)

Hera (bird)

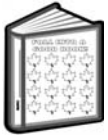
Leda (swan)

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Write a short creative piece based on your chosen myth.

Adapt the story to a contemporary setting.

If your story features an animal transformation consider the animal being a human character with animal like traits.

Reflection:

Consider the popularity of fairy-tales and reality TV make-over programs.

Why is the transformation narrative so popular with audiences?

Why are we fascinated by the 'before and after' story?



Extensions:

Compare & Contrast Ovid's 'Pygmalion and the Statue' story with Shaw's *Pygmalion*. How are they similar and/or different?

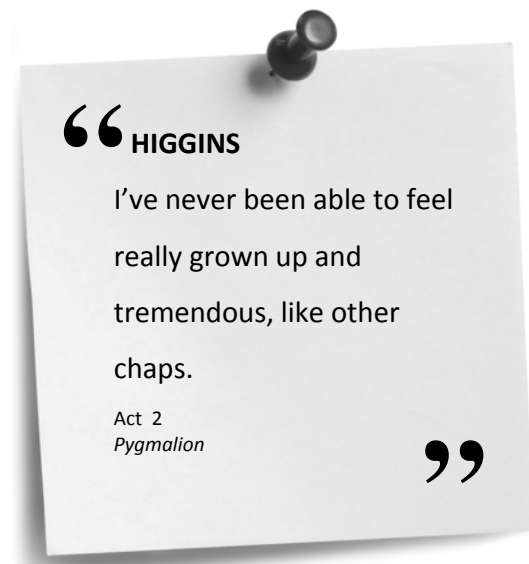
Discuss & Debate Shaw's integration of the Christian conversion and transformation narratives in *Pygmalion*.

Consider

Is Higgins' acting like a God?

Is Higgins' like the Dr Frankenstein of Mary Shelley's novel, acting in defiance of nature and God?

Is Higgins really a philanthropist with worthy intentions hiding behind a bullying exterior?



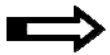
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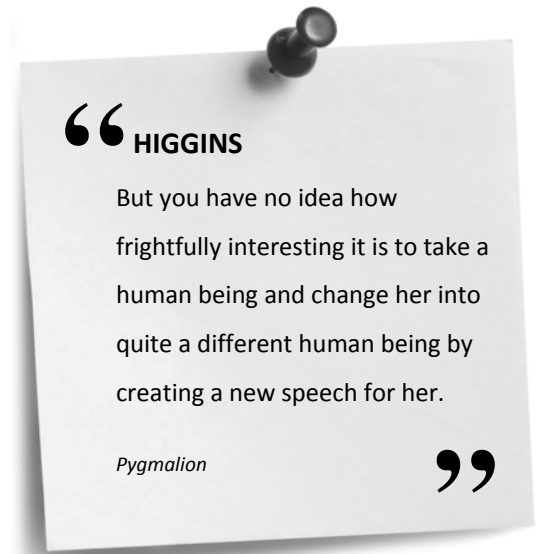
AIM: To understand and experience the different voices of Eliza.

Voices

Speech is often a determiner of social identity, social status and social acceptability. The way someone speaks and sounds can tell us a lot about where they come from. What else can we learn about a person from their voice?



List 5 examples from a book, television show or film where the way the characters speak is significant to understanding their world and social circumstances.



Name 3 people who have distinctive voices – a well known person (politician, radio announcer, entertainer), someone you know (friend, family member).

Collect & Listen to a recording of their voice.

Describe their voice.

Consider

Accent	Pitch	Pauses
Age	Rhythm	Repetitions
Ethnicity	Environment	
Volume	Personality	



Extension:

Record & listen to your own voice.

Describe the qualities of your voice.

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The Art of Speech

Form a circle.

Make the sound of the vowel and pass it on to the next person who repeats the sound and passes it around the circle.

Add Variations - loud to soft, soft to loud, slow and fast, wide and strong, exaggerated and emphasised, play with changes of pitch and rhythm.

Vowels

Shaped with the lips

OO as in 'choose'

AW as in 'law'

OI as in 'voice'

oo as in 'book'

o as in 'hot'

OH as in 'blow'

OW as in 'shout'

Shaped with the tongue

AH as in 'hard'

i as in 'hid'

AIR as in 'fair'

u as in 'hut'

AY as in 'face'

OOR as in 'lure'

ER as in 'burn'

EE as in 'breathe'

Uh as in 'India'

a as in 'had'

I as in 'sky'

e as in 'bed'

EAR as in 'hear'

Repeat making the sound of the constants

Constants

P-B

S-Z

T-D

SH-GE as in 'shine' & 'vision'

K-G

M-N-NG

L as in hard 'ball' & light as in 'love'

R

CH -J as in 'which' & 'gin'

H

F -V

W -Y as in 'yes' & 'will'

TH -TH as in 'bath' & 'there'

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Pronunciation Tongue Twisters

Say these aloud begin slowly and deliberately making sure you pronounce each word clearly.

Build up the speed until you can speak the phrases quickly without losing articulation.

“wicked cricket critic”

“papa’s got a head like a ping pong ball”

“unique New York”

“red lorry, yellow lorry”

“I’m not a pheasant plucker, I’m the pheasant plucker’s son, and I’m only plucking pheasants ‘till the pheasant plucker comes!”

“I want a proper cup of coffee in a proper copper coffee pot, clay pots, tin pots just won’t do, if I can’t have a cup of coffee in a proper copper coffee pot, I’ll have a cup of tea”

Eliza’s A-a-a-a-a-ah-ow-oooh



Take Eliza’s phrase ‘A-a-a-a-a-ah-ow-oooh!’

Speak softly and slowly progressively getting louder and faster.

Read in pairs the scene between Eliza and Higgins

Act Five

LIZA: No: not now. Never again, I have learnt my lesson. I don’t believe I could utter one of the old sounds if I tried. A-a-a-a-a-ah-ow-oooh!

HIGGINS: Aha! Just so. A-a-a-a-ahowoooh! A-a-a-a-ahowoooh! Victory!
A-a-a-a-ahowoooh! Victory!

Reflection:

Why does Higgins see Eliza’s ability to recall her cockney accent a ‘victory’ for him?

Edwardian Cockney

Eliza’s Edwardian cockney accent would have been different to the way cockney sounds today. In Edwardian cockney the vowel sounds were emphasised and exaggerated. The word ‘dear’ would have a strong ‘a’ sound at the end of the word, making it sound like two syllables. And

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the word 'son' would have been pronounced as 'san'.

Edwardian cockney sounds were 'wide and strong' with lots of words ending in 'aaaaa'.

For example: 'crown' was 'craan',

'nothing' was 'nufin',

'girl' was 'gew'

'Elsewhere' was 'elsweaaaaa'

For the aristocratic accent the sounds were the opposite to those of cockneys. The vowels were open, long and 'tall'. For example 'her' was 'har'.



Compare & Contrast Eliza's Cockney accent with her aristocratic one.

Edwardian Cockney

LIZA: Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y' dooty bawmz a mather should, eed now betttern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy athaht pyin. Will ye-oo py me fthem?

Edwardian Aristocratic English Translation

LIZA: Oh, he's your son, is he? Well, if you'd done your duty by him as a mother should, he'd know better than to spoil a poor girl's flowers then run away without paying. Will you pay me for them?



Read Aloud the two versions

Notice the differences between the two accents

How do you feel speaking Cockney? Aristocratic? Which do you prefer? Why?

Australian English

The Australian accent features a restricted jaw movement. The vowel sounds are placed in the middle to the back of the mouth and the back of the tongue has to work hard to define the vowels. This produces the nasal sound typical of a strong Australian accent.



Write & Perform two contrasting monologues

In Version #1 the character is speaking in a broad Australian accent

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In Version #2 the character speaks in a well-spoken Australian accent – where the vowels are placed forward in the mouth.

Discuss & Describe the differences between speaking a broad and a well-spoken Australian accent.

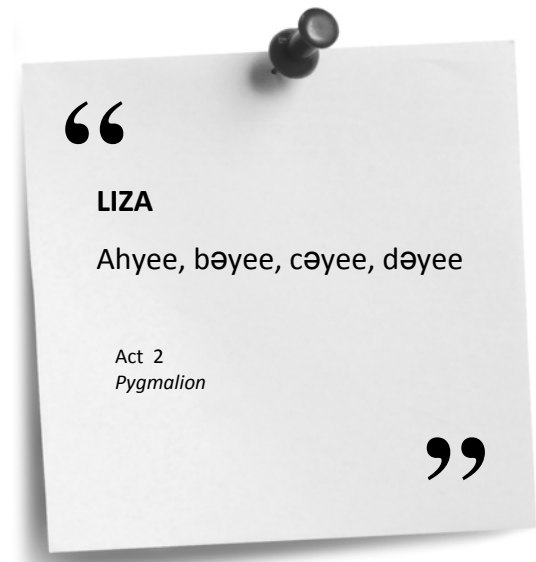
Performance Reflection:

How does Eliza’s voice change through the performance?

References:

Tawkin' like a cockney ain't nufin like wot I fort: Kara Tointon on preparing to play Eliza Doolittle in Pygmalion, by Kara Tointon, Daily Mail Online, 17th July, 2011

Voice and the Actor, Cicely Berry



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AIM: To explore the theme of social expectations and the role of education in *Pygmalion*

Pygmalion in the Classroom

The term *Pygmalion effect* refers to the effects of expectations, and how what one person expects of another can effect their sense of self, self-esteem, motivation.



List all the things other people expect of you – your parent/s, guardians, family members, friends, teachers.

List all the things you expect of others.

List all things you expect of your self.

Compare & Contrast the differences between expectations.

Reflection:

How do other people's expectations effect your behaviour, self-esteem, motivation?



Consider the effect of low, high and or unrealistic expectations on your sense of self.

Write a short piece on the effect of low or high expectations on a young person's education.

LIZA: One would think you was my father.

HIGGINS: If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you.



Discuss & Debate Higgins role as a teacher and father figure to Eliza.

What are Higgins's expectations of Eliza?

What does Eliza expect of Higgins?

Find quotes from the play to support your responses.

Reflection:

How much do Higgins' expectations of Eliza contribute to her success?

LIZA: The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated.

How do Eliza's expectations of herself contribute to her success?

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+ Extensions:

Write a short piece from Higgins point of view defending his teaching methods.

Write a letter of complaint by Eliza to the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics on Higgins' treatment of her.

Explain the meaning of the idiom, 'You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear'.

Write a short piece using this or one of the idioms listed as your title.

'You can't teach an old dog new tricks'

'Once a guttersnipe, always a guttersnipe'

'A leopard can't change its spots'



The Lesson Scene

Form groups of three

Read & Discuss the following scene

Act 2

Higgins Say your alphabet.

Liza I know my alphabet. Do you think I know nothing? I don't need to be taught like a child.

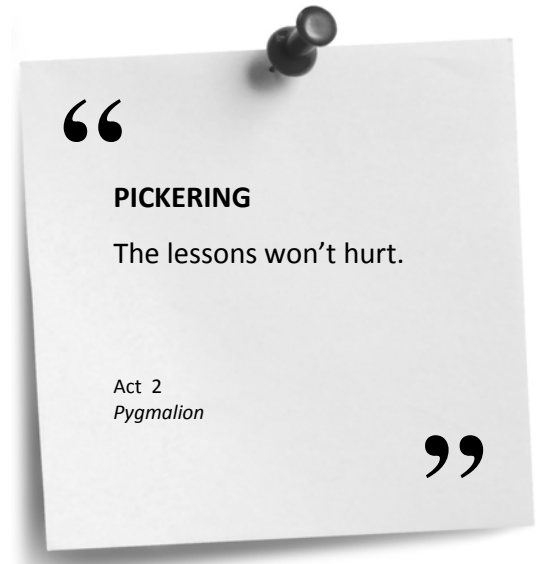
Higgins [*thundering*] Say your alphabet.

Pickering Say it, Miss Doolittle. You will understand presently. Do what he tells you; and let him teach you in his own way.

Liza Oh well, if you put it like that – Ahyee, bəyee, cəyee, dəyee –

Higgins [*with the roar of a wounded lion*] Stop. Listen to this, Pickering. This is what we pay for as elementary education. This unfortunate animal is locked up for nine years in school at our expense to teach her to speak and read the language of Shakespeare and Milton. And the result is Ahyee, Bəyee, Cəyee, Dəyee. [*To Eliza*] Say A, B, C, D.

Liza [*almost in tears*] But I'm saying it. Ahyee, Bəyee, Cəyee –



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Higgins Stop. Say a cup of tea.

Liza A cappətə- ee.

Higgins Put your tongue forward until it squeezes against the top of your lower teeth. Now say cup.

Liza C-c-c – I can't. C-Cup.

Pickering Good. Splendid, Miss Doolittle.

Higgins By Jupiter, she's done it at the first shot. Pickering: we shall make a duchess of her. [*To Eliza*] Now do you think you could possibly say tea? No tə-yeə, mind: if you ever say bəyeə, cəyeə, dəyeə again you shall be dragged round the room three times by the hair of your head. [*Fortissimo*] T,T,T,T.

Liza [*weeping*] I can't hear no difference cep that it sounds more genteel-like when you say it.

Higgins Well, if you can hear the difference, what the devil are you crying for?
Pickering give her a chocolate.

Pickering No, no. Never mind crying a little, Miss Doolittle; you are doing very well; and the lessons won't hurt. I promise you I won't let him drag you round the room by your hair.

Higgins Be off with you to Mrs Pearce and tell her about it. Think about it. Try to do it your self; and keep your tongue well forward in your mouth instead of trying to roll it up and swallow it. Another lesson at half-past four this afternoon. Away with you.

Eliza, still sobbing, rushes from the room.



Look up the meaning in the dictionary of any unfamiliar words or phrases.

Compare & Contrast Higgins and Pickering's behaviour.

Discuss Eliza's behaviour and her reactions to Higgins's 'lesson'.

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Present two versions of the scene.

Version #1 **Play** the scene as written, adhering to Shaw's stage directions.

Version #2 **Add** Eliza's subtext – allow her to speak her unspoken 'inner thoughts'.

What is Eliza *really* thinking?

What would she *really* want to say to Higgins if she could?

Discuss the two versions.



Extension:

Add Pickering's subtext.

Write & Present the unwritten scene between Eliza and Mrs Pearce.

The scene begins with

Eliza, still crying, runs to find Mrs Pearce ...



AIM: To discuss and analyse *Pygmalion* as a social parable for inclusion.

Language & Social Inclusion

Higgins' is going to improve Eliza's life through getting her to talk better English. But does Higgins really care about Eliza? Or is he only interested in winning his bet?

More than anything else, language shows we "belong", providing the most natural badge, or symbol, of public and private identity.

David Crystal

While Eliza gains the social advantages of a new identity, she asks Higgins 'What's to become of me?' She has learnt a new language and achieved Higgins' social ideal but on the way she has forgotten her own language. Why is Eliza concerned about her future?



Discuss & Debate how the way we speak 'shows we belong' and connects us to our family, peer group, community.

Give 3 examples of how your voice and language gives you a sense of identity.

Higgins disguised as a 'note-taker' spies on Eliza describing her as speaking 'kerbstone', 'gutter' English as a metaphor for her low income as a street flower seller.

THE NOTE TAKER: You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party.

THE FLOWER GIRL: What's that you say?



Think about people you know. How do they speak? Are there particular ways they express themselves? Does the way they speak reflect their economic status?

What sort of voices do they have? Are they straight forward speakers or do they use a lot of descriptive words, humour, exaggeration?

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Record a real conversation. It can be strangers or people you know. You can be one of the speakers.

Transcribe it as accurately as possible, putting in all the ums and ers and the parts when it becomes repetitious and incomprehensible.



Imagine a scene told through one of more of these voices based on your recorded transcription.

Write and /or Perform a monologue or dialogue based on the recorded transcript.



Discuss if and how the person's voice and speech connects them to their social environment through their accent, choice of words, tone of expression and or other distinguishing features.

+

Extension:

Eliza begins as an outsider, excluded from opportunities for education and employment because of her poor economic and social status. Equipped with new skills and new confidence in her abilities she decides to become a Phonetics teacher and extend her influence toward helping others.

A job has been advertised for a Phonetics and Linguistics teacher.

Write a job application for the position from Eliza's point of view.

Your job application must include:

- covering letter stating why you want the job and why you are the best person for the position.
- 150 word resume describing your level of skill and experience
- letter of introduction by Colonel Pickering
- reference from Professor Higgins in support of your application.
- direct quotes from the play text

References

The Writing Book, Kate Grenville

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AIM: To understand and critique the production's interpretive approach to the staging of *Pygmalion*.



Review & Interview

List 3-5 key characteristics of director Peter Evan's approach to directing *Pygmalion*.



Write a 250 word review of the production incorporating your observations about his interpretation of the play.



Read 'Time Out' interview with Peter Evans and Andrea Demeteriades

<http://www.au.timeout.com/sydney/theatre/events/27588/pygmalion>

Compare their comments on the pre-production process and decision making with your experience of the seeing production.



Interview a fellow student on their views and opinions of the production.

Write 5-7 interview questions you would like to ask them.

Avoid 'closed' questions that can be answered with 'yes' and 'no'.

Ask 'open' questions that will encourage a more detailed response.

For example:

Closed Question: Did you like the production?

Open Question: What did you like most about the production?

If you only get a 'yes' or 'no' response ask the person to explain further what they mean in more detail.

Consider asking questions that will give you information about things in the production you would like to know more about.



Staging & Directions

Shaw wrote detailed stage directions in his play texts.

Compare & Contrast Shaw's stage directions of the scene described in Act Four with the directorial and staging choices made by Peter Evans.

How much does Evans adhere or ignore Shaw's directions?

Describe the stylistic differences between the play script and the production.



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Which version do you prefer? Why?

Shaw's Stage Directions

Act Four

The furniture of Eliza's room has been increased by a big wardrobe and a sumptuous dressing-table. She comes in and switches on the electric light. She goes to the wardrobe; opens it; and pulls out a walking dress, a hat, and a pair of shoes, which she throws on the bed. She takes off her evening dress and shoes: then takes a padded hanger from the wardrobe; adjusts it carefully in the evening dress: and hangs it in the wardrobe, which she shuts with a slam. She puts on her walking shoes, her walking dress, and hat. She takes her wrist watch from the dressing-table and fastens it on. She pulls on her gloves; takes her vanity bag; and looks into it to see that her purse is there before hanging it on her wrist. She makes for the door. Every movement expresses her furious resolution.

She takes a last look at herself in the glass.

She suddenly puts out her tongue at herself: then leaves the room, switching off the electric light at the door.

Meanwhile, in the street outside, Freddy Eynsford Hill, lovelorn, is gazing up at the second floor, in which one of the windows is still lighted.

The light goes out.

Looking Into The Looking Glass

'Every movement expresses her furious resolution'



Discuss the significance of the looking glass scene.

What does Eliza's change of clothes represent?

Why does she look at herself in the mirror?

What does she see?

Why does she poke her tongue out at herself?



Write & Perform Eliza's unwritten inner monologue.

Describe how she perceives her external physical appearance.

Describe her inner feelings and thoughts.



Explore what has brought her to the decision to now leave Higgins.

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“

ELIZA

I am in a dream now.

Act 4
Pygmalion

”



AIM: To explore and analyse the 'performing' of Eliza.

Eliza on Screen & Stage



Research the history of playing Eliza by some of the world's best known actresses, such as:

-Mrs Patrick Campbell

-Clare Danes



-Audrey Hepburn

-Wendy Hiller

-Kiera Knightly

-Kara Tointon



Compare & Contrast a screen performance of Eliza with the stage performance by Andrea Demetriades.

What are the differences and similarities between the performances?



Which performance do you prefer? Why?

Eliza As Social Actor.



Eliza plays the lead role in Dr Higgins's linguistic conversion drama of wishing to turn a guttersnipe into a duchess. How comfortable is Eliza in her role as Duchess? As 'a heartless guttersnipe'?

In a recent interview Andrea Demetriades talks about playing Eliza:

What I'm mostly interested in is the idea of this girl going on what is almost an odyssey. We all do things to get a better partner, a better family, a better life. We change ourselves. I love how Eliza's so good at it: she goes to the embassy where she's extraordinary at it and people don't even know where she's come from. She's so clever that she forms this new identity. She doesn't change from the inside but all these outside aspects are changed.

Do you agree with her assessment of Eliza's character?

Do you agree that Eliza doesn't change from 'the inside'?

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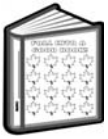


Discuss & Debate the following quote with reference to Eliza being a ‘social actor’.

People are not only playwrights, because of the way in which they create their own roles and scripts in life, but are also actors who must perform these plans of social behavior. In addition, they are also the audience who socially edits their performance, and the critics who must evaluate them.

Robert N. St. Clair,

Language and the Social Construction of Reality



Make a list of everything Higgins say about Eliza.

Make a list of everything Eliza says about her self.

Make a list of everything she says about Higgins.

What do the lists tell us about Eliza? About Higgins? About their relationship?



Extension:

Make lists for other characters and what they say about themselves and others.

How do the lists help us think about the character’s varying roles and functions in the play?

Eliza As Unique

[Eliza] has no peers, no past, and no true home. After the embassy reception she makes a sad trip back to Covent Garden, only to find that she no longer belongs there. It is likely that for the rest of her life Eliza will experience ... “the anxiety of uniqueness.”

Wang Xiaoyan



Discuss this quote with reference to Eliza’s return to Wimpole Street laboratory in Act Four.

Explain Eliza’s silence as Higgins and Pickering discuss her in the third person, as if wasn’t there.

“

MRS HIGGINS

You certainly are a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll.

Act 3
Pygmalion

”

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When Eliza tells Higgins he will not really miss her when she's gone, he says she can 'take away the voice and the face' but he cannot replace her 'soul'.

LIZA When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the gramophone on.
It's got no feelings to hurt.

HIGGINS I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you.

What does he mean by 'They are not you'?

Who is the 'real' Eliza?

Post-Performance Reflection:

How has Eliza changed by the end of the play?

Does Higgins change?

What does Higgins learn from Eliza?

Reference:

'The Identity Construction and Split Self of Eliza in *Pygmalion*: a Psychoanalytic Perspective',
Wang Xiaoyan, 2008.

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AIM: To explore *Pygmalion's* representation of difference and social inclusion.

The Migrant Experience

migrate to pass from one place to another

to change one's abode to another country

to move

Chamber's English Dictionary



Read this excerpt from the 'Time Out' interview with Peter Evans and Andrea Demetriades.

Peter: We'll have to mould it a bit, and that will help your connection with it. I think there will be a tension between what is obviously an Australian company doing this play, which is an English play. The reason I didn't want all the froufrou is that we aren't doing this in London. And in a way casting Andy is like that, it's a peculiarly Australian casting choice and I like the tension it's going to have of us doing an English play like that.

Andrea: I think people from different minority groups in Australia are constantly feeling this thing. That I have to learn this – I know my father did – to learn English, to get a good job.

Peter: It's got resonance for people who have gone through that kind of experience.

Andrea: You know the idea of taking an animal and trying to teach it some tricks to make it more human – I think that's what's really exciting about this.

Peter: I hope that people will see, even with the accent, it will still have a peculiarly Australian footprint on it. The migrant experience is really interesting, so if we can get resonance with that, that will be great.



Discuss Andrea Demetriades' reference to her Greek father having to learn English to get a 'good job' and Eliza and her father, Arthur Doolittle being barred from certain jobs as members of the uneducated British working class.

How is Eliza a migrant? Where does she move from and to where?

How is her experience similar/dissimilar to the migrant experience?

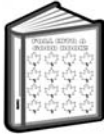
What new 'tricks' must she learn in order to survive in Higgins' world?

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Language of Origin Questionnaire

What is your country of origin?

What is your first language?

Do you speak another language?

What languages are spoken at home?

Have you ever tried to learn another language?

Describe your experience – level of difficulty, enjoyment?

What are the advantages of speaking another language besides English?

How important is speaking English to you?

How important is speaking English in Australia?

New Skills, New Tricks



It is generally believed that people from a migrant background will often do better in a new country than those who were born in the same country.

Why do you think this is the case?

Are you from a migrant background?

How does having a migrant background motivate you to want to achieve? Or not?



Write a short creative piece on the theme of having to learn something new in order to have something you want.

For example:

- new knowledge for a job or study opportunity you want to pursue
- new skill that will enable you to participate in a specialized competition or event
- new language to travel or communicate with other people who speak that language
- new behaviour so will fit into a social group or class you desire to belong to
- new appearance so you can impress some-one, feel more accepted

Consider

What are your reasons for wanting to learn this new skill/language/behaviour?

What are the consequences if you don't achieve your goal to succeed?

How hard are you prepared to work to achieve your want?

What sacrifices will you make in order to be successful?

What will you gain if you succeed? What will happen if you don't?

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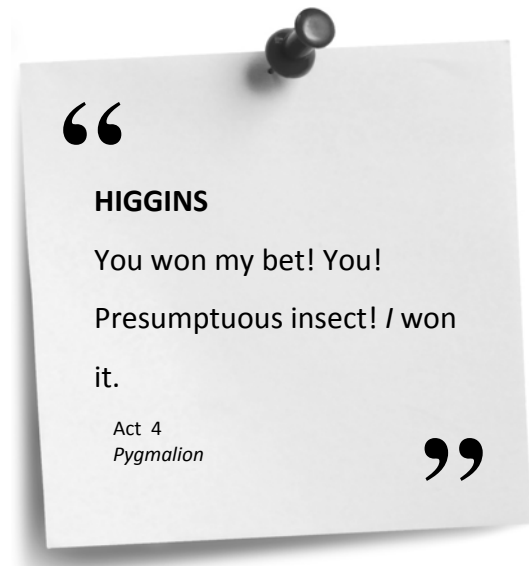
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+ Extension:

Ironically by becoming members of the upper classes Eliza and her father no longer belong to where they came from. Eliza becomes a Duchess but without the corresponding financial means to support her new social status. Arthur Doolittle reluctantly must marry his girlfriend to become socially respectable.

Write a follow-up creative piece entitled 'Be careful for what you wish for' where you explore the consequences of having achieved your want.

Consider the negative, positive or unforeseen consequences of getting what you thought you wanted.



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AIM: To examine and debate the relevance of Shaw's *Pygmalion* to a contemporary Australian audience.

Shaw Then

He wrote his plays with instinctive sureness, based on the certainty that he had a great deal to say.

Per Hallström,
Chairman Nobel Prize Committee



Pygmalion is not a fairy tale but a critiquing of the class system.

Discuss & Debate this statement with reference to Shaw's adaptation of the transformation 'rags to riches' fairy tale in *Pygmalion*.

[*Pygmalion*] is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that great art can never be anything else.

George Bernard Shaw



Discuss Shaw's admission of being didactic in *Pygmalion*.

What is Shaw's didactic message?

What did he want his audience to be thinking about?

Shaw Now



Write a short commentary on the STC production from Shaw's point of view.

What would he say? What would he like? What would he object to?

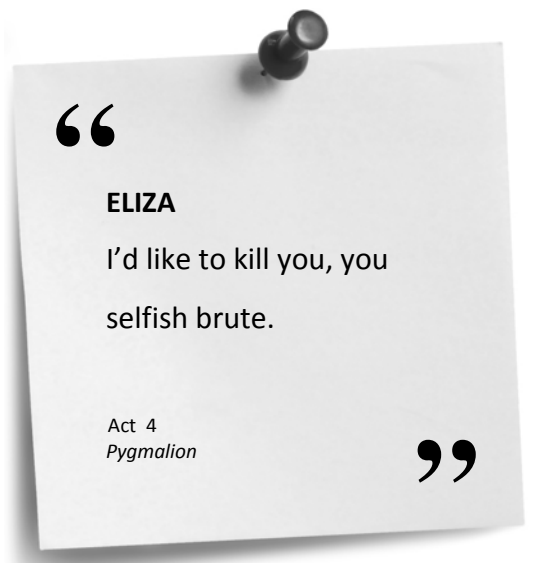


Pygmalion is an adaptation of Ovid's metamorphosis.

Choose your favourite scene from the play.

Adapt it to a contemporary setting.

Rehearse & Perform the scene



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Extension:

Rehearse & Perform the original scene as written by Shaw.

Compare & Contrast the original with the contemporary adaptation.

Shaw is just extraordinary the way he writes these deeply flawed human characters. I think that's exciting. We don't really get to do a lot of Shaw's work here.

Andrea Demetriades



Discuss & Debate Andrea Demetriades's statement with reference to Shaw's ability to create 'flawed' characters.

Choose two contrasting characters from the play.

List 3 flaws for each.

Post Performance Reflection:

Are there new things you have learned about Shaw's text from seeing this production?

Do you think this production speaks to a young audience?

Why are Shaw's plays rarely performed in Australia?

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