

MALTHOUSE

EDUCATION

SUITCASE SERIES 2026

INFORMATION PACK

SEMESTERS ONE & TWO





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INTRODUCTION

The Suitcase Series is Malthouse Theatre's award-winning education program that has been inspiring Victorian students since 2010. Combining classroom activity with in-theatre performance, this innovative participatory program is an opportunity for (mainly) Year 9 and 10 students to develop and expand their theatre-making skills and share work with peers.

Starting with a blank page or stage, a 20-minute time limit and the topic of **Climate Change**, the piece is created by students from the needs or interests of the group. There is also infinite space for the young participants to bring their own ideas, issues, or events, pictures, songs, plays, poems, or any other stimulus.

The Suitcase Series provides a well-rounded method of collaborative creation in which all students take on the roles of writers, actors, dramaturgs, directors and production crew, and negotiate the creation of their unique short piece.

While the resulting performance will undoubtedly be a source of pride for the students and the school, ultimately it is the *process* of devising work for the Suitcase Series that is as – if not *more* – important than the finished product.

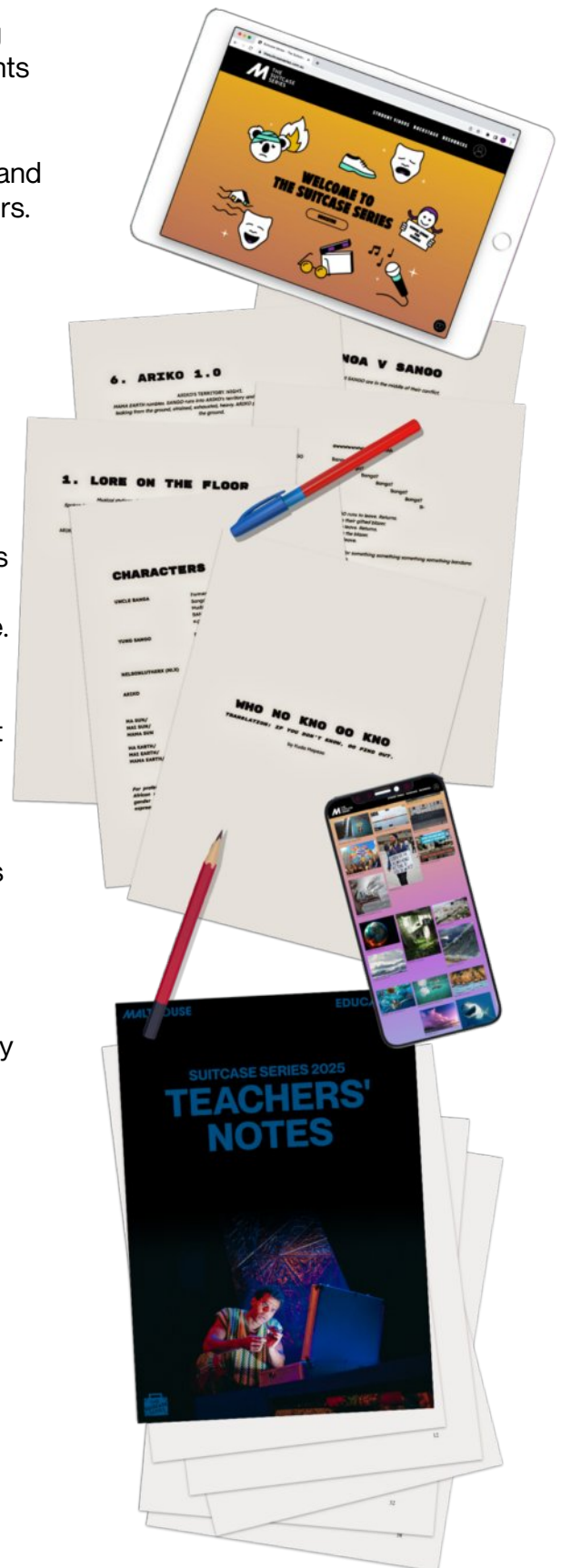
In 2026 we are offering both our traditional Suitcase Series version in Semester Two, featuring a newly commissioned Malthouse script as provocation, as well as a broader-resourced Semester One version.

Each version provides a valuable and innovative opportunity to structure your drama curriculum across an entire semester's unit of work.

This document shows how a responsive theatre-making or playbuilding program like Malthouse's Suitcase Series can greatly boost young participants' academic and personal capabilities.

Please get in touch if you have any questions, and I hope to see you and your class in our theatre – and on our stage – soon!

Lyall Brooks
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HOW IT WORKS



SEMESTER TWO

THE CLASSIC VERSION






-  Year 9 and 10 students are given material, structures and provocations associated with our newly commissioned script – this year is the premiere year of the exciting new work *Ritual Ritual Ritual* by Rae Perks – as well as access to our online platform of resources, activities and other stimuli.
-  Students work together to develop a 20-minute piece of theatre in response.
 - This should be completely original – using any ideas from the script pack or our resources as stimulus, or their own research material, or simply their unique experience and storytelling goals.
 - You will be supported by comprehensive teachers' notes and other resources, accessed on our Suitcase Series online portal.
-  They can act, compose, write, design, dance, direct, choreograph, sing, rap, play an instrument, pop and lock... whatever skills they want or need to tell their story.
-  All costumes, props and set pieces **must fit inside one suitcase** – hence the name of the program!
-  They then come to The Malthouse **in October** for an in-theatre day to present their work.
 - Students from a range of schools come together in the Beckett Theatre to share and respond to each other's performances.
 - The in-theatre day is facilitated by the Malthouse Education Coordinator and a member of the cast or creative team.
 - In the afternoon, students watch the professional **Malthouse production of *Ritual Ritual Ritual***.
 - The audience members will then engage in a post-show Q&A with the full cast.

This was unlike any project I've ever done, for drama or outside of it. The requirements of having to be inspired by the Who No Know No script and the ability to take lines from it and make it into our own play, completely up to our own imagination and decisions made this so interesting, at times challenging. I thoroughly enjoyed watching the shows done by other schoolkids as well as the professionals watching our performance and getting to hear what they thought about our work; it was all very special.

Student

SEMESTER ONE

THE FLEXIBLE VERSION





-  Year 9 and 10 students are given access to our online platform of resources, recommended playtexts, activities and stimuli – as well as a library of many of our past Suitcase Series commissioned scripts.
-  Students work together to develop a 20-minute piece of theatre in response.
 - This should be completely original – using any of our scripts and resources as stimulus, or their own research material, or simply their unique experience and storytelling goals.
 - You will be supported by comprehensive teachers' notes and other resources, accessed on our Suitcase Series online portal.
-  They can act, compose, write, design, dance, direct, choreograph, sing, rap, play an instrument, pop and rock... whatever skills they want or need to tell their story.
-  All costumes, props and set pieces **must fit inside one suitcase** – hence the name of the program!
-  They then come to The Malthouse **in June** for an in-theatre day to present their work.
 - Students from a range of schools come together in the Beckett Theatre to share and respond to each other's performances.
 - The in-theatre day is facilitated by the Malthouse Education Coordinator and a member of the Malthouse artistic team.
 - In the afternoon, students participate in a round robin-style series of **workshops and backstage tours**.

The great thing about The Suitcase Series is that our students are exposed to multiple ways of seeing. They get to witness the work of students from across the state and see how professional actors/directors have interpreted the same text that they have been working with. They get to share insights about their process of theatre making and learn about the process of other students and professionals. Performing on a professional stage elevates the status of their work and helps them to develop as young artists.

Teacher



DIGITAL PARTICIPATION

-  Year 9 and 10 students are given the same material as all other schools, including access to our Suitcase Series online platform full of resources, activities and stimuli.
-  Students work together to develop a 20-minute digital performance work in response.
 - This can be completely original, using playtexts, our resources, or their own experience and storytelling dreams, as a stimulus.
 - You will be supported by comprehensive teachers' notes and other resources, accessed on our Suitcase Series online portal.
-  They can act, compose, write, design, dance, direct, choreograph, sing, rap, play an instrument, pop and rock... whatever skills they want or need to tell their story. They may employ as much or as little digital technology as they wish in pursuit of their storytelling and presentation goals – or they can keep it as simple as they like!
-  At the same time as the in-theatre student performance season, the group will upload their completed digital work to the Suitcase Series website to share with other participating schools.
 - Students from a range of both in-theatre and digital participant schools can view and give feedback on each others' works.
 - Semester 2 participants will also get digital access to watch the professional Malthouse production of *Ritual Ritual Ritual*.

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

The Suitcase Series web portal is the platform to house our living resource hub – for communication, sharing, and access to materials to assist both teachers and students throughout your entire performance-devising journey.

For teachers, we have the *Ritual Ritual Ritual* script pack (or a catalogue of previous Suitcase Series scripts for Semester One participants), notes, class plans and activity extensions ready to go. Every month we also hold an online check-in session for questions and sharing (these are then added to the hub) and closer to the performance day we will provide detailed theatre tech specs so you're ready to seamlessly transition your classroom work onto the Beckett stage.

For students, there are interactive inspiration boards of images, articles and further research – fistfuls of threads for them to pull, leveraging the text(s), the different themes, the characters, the background, the styles, and/or the issues. These are kept up to date by us, and we encourage teachers to share their own stimulus materials they've found.

For the whole class, we will provide a platform for all schools to share their final performances, whether digital or recorded live by Malthouse, and (for Semester Two participants) behind-the-scenes updates on our own production of *Ritual Ritual Ritual* – including video interviews with the performers, director, designers and playwright.

Wow! My kids really enjoyed responding to the script and terrific resources and then creating their own work – and got such a kick out of watching the other schools' performances too! It really is such a great program.

Teacher

THE DETAILS





DATES

SEMESTER TWO

(featuring *Ritual Ritual Ritual* by Rae Perks)

19 October – 30 October 2025

SEMESTER 1 FLEXIBLE PROGRAM

16 – 19 June 2025

Malthouse Theatre, Southbank

PRICES

Metro schools \$38.00 per student

Regional & Low ICSEA \$35.00 per student

Accompanying teachers FREE (up to 2 per group)

A non-refundable deposit equivalent to 10 student-price tickets is required to secure your place.

A one-off booking fee of \$5 per school will also be applied on the first invoice.

BOOKINGS & INFORMATION

Head to Malthouse Education to find the relevant Suitcase Series page and book your school's spot by filling out the registration form:

malthousetheatre.com.au/education

For any queries, please don't hesitate to contact Lyall Brooks, Malthouse Education Coordinator:

lbrooks@malthousetheatre.com.au

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SUPPORTING PARTNER

GIRGENSOHN
FOUNDATION

The Suitcase Series also receives generous support from individual Malthouse Muse donors.



CURRICULUM LINKS



GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

The playbuilding aspect of The Suitcase Series is inherently applicable to existing structures of class plans, semester designs, unit and project checkpoints, and state education curricula.

The following general, project-long learning intention examples may be applied to the work undertaken:

- Develop a broad and applied understanding of performing arts concepts and skills.
- Build further specialised knowledge through in-depth explorations.
- Make connections between the student's work and potential career pathways.
- Explore and analyse contemporary issues, and the student's relationship to these themes and ideas.
- Develop collaborative skills and abilities.
- Identify and cultivate a sense of empathy and understanding for different viewpoints (cultures/values/beliefs).
- Cultivate self-direction and assertiveness in the student's own learning, and develop a sense of empowerment and agency by generating content from their own ideas.

Across the years of The Suitcase Series a strong social and personal learning is apparent, with the same terms used by teachers and students alike: collaboration, patience, confidence, risk taking, resilience, connectedness, leadership, careers, contribution, process, generation, product, reflection, and mentoring. Teachers also highlighted the critical discussion of each other's work and the transferable skills that enable young people to converse and interact with people outside their current social group.

Dr Meg Upton

The Suitcase Series: An Enduring Participatory Theatre Making Program in Even More Urgent Times

Other personal, creative and critical outcomes include but are not limited to:

- social cohesion and teamwork;
- giving and accepting constructive criticism;
- taking on a position of responsibility;
- building confidence and self-esteem;
- identity development;
- physical and mental agility;
- emotional control;
- developing critical literacy and effective communication skills;
- sharing diverse perspectives;
- complex problem solving;
- perseverance, pride and a sense of satisfaction for both personal achievements and collective accomplishment; and
- catharsis for experienced events and issues.

Having attended the program many times now I can honestly say that each and every year the program improves. This year was absolutely fantastic and a big part of that is due to the positive and inclusive environment that you cultivated on the day. I know my students had an absolute ball and enjoyed themselves so much that they are now begging for another performance opportunity (the Suitcase Series is normally their final performance for the year). This is a massive sign of the success of the program, in that it has ignited a passion for the Arts.

In my experience, there is honestly no program akin to the Suitcase Series which values students' voices and creativity, and also gives them an opportunity to perform in a professional theatre. I cannot praise and thank you the whole Malthouse team enough!

Teacher

SUBJECT LINKS

The Suitcase Series can essentially be applied to, or used as, an entire unit or elective semester of work. It integrates with and addresses the following Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority areas.

DRAMA

The program allows the classroom to work through the three stages of the production process, with students getting a sense of: approaching a script; developing their responses; and performing. It encourages teachers to branch off when and however they want – they can take advantage of the program and resources to introduce students to non-naturalism, epic theatre, absurdism, Stanislavsky, and many more – and embed that learning back into the work they're creating.

Most if not all areas of the Victorian Curriculum for Drama in Years 7-10 will be addressed, across all major targeted learning areas:

- The elements of drama
- Viewpoints
- Forms
- Skills, techniques and processes
- Materials

Previously, teachers have identified the program's capacity to incorporate skills such as script writing, acting, design, direction, costume, makeup, sound, lighting, and ensemble making, and to encourage the writing-performing-revising-cycle that reflects that of professional theatre.

Teachers speak of the passion and excitement students had for theatre making after participating in the program, and recognise the program's capacity to illuminate students' understanding of ensemble work and a chance to engage with a variety of theatrical conventions, the meaning of collaborative process, and the capacity to develop diverse and essential performing arts skills in stagecraft, research, design and production – and working to deadlines!.

At my new school, I was facing a culture within the Performing Arts that was quite negative and complacent – so I needed to use The Suitcase Series to engage my group of Year 10 Drama students . . . and it worked! The students were excited about performing!

Teacher

ENGLISH

Language

- Language variation and change
- Language for interaction
- Text structure and organisation
- Expressing and developing ideas
- Phonics and word knowledge

Literature

- Literature and context
- Creating literature

Literacy

- Texts in context
- Interacting with others
- Interpreting, analysing, evaluating
- Creating texts

THE CAPABILITIES

Ethical

- Analyse and evaluate
- Recognise contestability
- Cultivate open-mindedness

Personal and Social

- Emotional expression recognition, understanding and evaluation
- Resilience and personal quality awareness
- Empathy development and diversity support for a cohesive community
- Respectful relationships and interpersonal skills
- Effective teamwork and challenging situation management

Critical and Creative Thinking

- Understanding and application of thinking processes
- Adventurous and flexible thinking
- Process evaluation across unfamiliar contexts

Intercultural

- Respect and awareness of community cultural diversity
- Intercultural influences on attitude, values and beliefs
- Acceptance and appreciation of diversity for a cohesive community

