



What The Ocean Said

Creative Learning
Teacher Resource



Resource Overview

This learning resource has been developed for Primary students and supports multidisciplinary learning across English, Drama, Music, HSIE and Science and Technology.

This resource includes discussion questions and activities designed for the classroom but can be adapted to suit the needs of your students and teaching context.

Performance Overview

General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities

Literacy	Creative and Critical Thinking	Personal and Social Capability	Sustainability
Students engage with narrative language, vivid imagery and descriptive storytelling. Students build vocabulary and deepen their understanding of how language creates mood, character and place.	Students inhabit the perspectives of animals – developing their creative thinking, empathy and an expanded sense of the world around them.	Students are introduced to mindfulness and meditation through story, gaining accessible and embodied tools for emotional regulation and self-awareness.	Students develop a genuine connection to the natural world through the wonder of Sydney Harbour's marine environment. They begin to consider their relationship to oceans, ecosystems and the living things that depend on a healthy harbour.

Workshop Overview

What students can expect – sensory elements

Touch

- Sitting on carpeted floor and soft cushions

Sight

- Images of clouds, underwater and landscape scenery
- Soft and low-lighting
- Projected images on large silk fabric
- Moments of no lighting except for the projected image

Sound

- Gentle and nature-like soundscape
- Guided narrative and meditation
- Quiet moments of meditation and breathing

Movement

- Mix of seated and lying down activities
- 50-minute session – 10-minute Q&A



**A (very) brief history of the Sydney
Opera House**

Tubowgule

Now known as Bennelong Point

The Gadigal people in Warrang/Warrane (Sydney Cove) call the place around the Opera House 'Tubowgule' – meaning the knowledge water.

Tubowgule was a point located at the end of a long, wide ridge and surrounded by rocky shoals that mostly covered at high tide.

The Gadigal believe that the coming together of the saltwater (from the Pacific Ocean) and freshwater (from the Parramatta River) creates a surge of energy and nutrients – making the Sydney Harbour an ideal spot for fishing, eating, meeting and sharing stories.



Tubowgule

Now known as Bennelong Point

Being close to the harbour, cove, freshwater creek and mud flats, the area was rich in resources. This included oysters, mussels, fish, possums, wallabies, kangaroos and many edible plants.

Aboriginal people gathered and ate these foods over thousands of years, leaving behind shells and animal bones that formed 'middens' around Sydney Harbour



Whispers, 2023, Megan Cope, Sydney Opera House.

This was an art installation of a midden made of 85,000 repurposed oyster shell waste and other natural and recycled materials.

The Sydney Opera House

A building nobody thought was possible

In 1956, the NSW government held an international competition for a new performing arts centre on Tubowgule, now known as Bennelong Point.

Over 220 entries arrived from 32 countries, and the winner was a Danish architect named Jørn Utzon.

Today, the Opera House is a World Heritage-listed building and the country's number one tourist destination.

It welcomes more than 10.9 million visitors a year and hosts more than 1,800 performances attended by more than 1.4 million people.



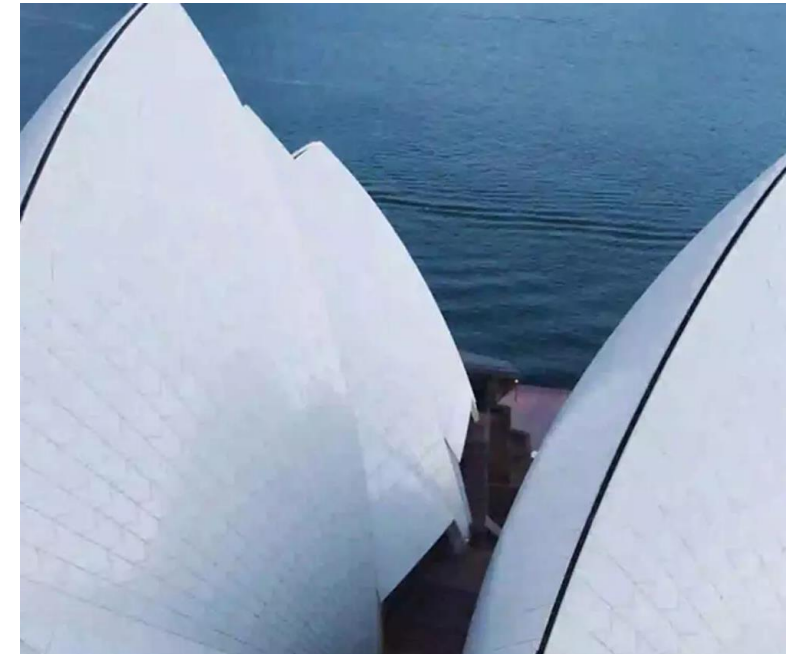
Jørn Utzon

The vision: shells, sails and nature

When designing the Opera House, Jørn Utzon was inspired by nature. The way an orange peels apart, the curve of a nautilus shell, the wings of a bird, the colours of the sunrise, and the sunset.

Utzon was also interested in how designs inspired by nature can shape the visitor experience.

He wanted the building to bring joy, transport people to another world, offer a sense of detachment from the city, and create moments of rest.



Activities



Discussion Questions

Primary students

Have you ever visited the Sydney Harbour or been near the ocean?
What did you notice – what did you see, hear, smell or feel?

What do you think lives beneath the Sydney Harbour?

If you could transform into any ocean creature, what would you choose and why?

What words would you use to describe the underwater world?

Activity 1

Imagining natural worlds

Ask students to imagine their favourite place.

- *What does it look like?*
- *What does it sound like?*
- *Who or what lives there?*
- *What does it smell or taste like?*
- *Who is with you?*
- *What are you doing when you are there?*

Create a list of words using adjectives and verbs that help you describe and explain this special place.

Create a drawing, postcard, sculpture or poem about your special place and share it with a friend or someone close to you.



Activity 2

Caring for the environment

Ask students: What does the environment look like around you?

- *What colours do you see?*
- *What smells, textures, and shapes do you see?*

Draw a picture of the environment.

Have a discussion with your class around the ways that we can care for our environment.

Create an underwater world (or sea creature puppet) using cardboard coloured paper and any other recycled materials. This may include plastic, packaging, bottle caps, netting from fruit, and so much more.

Ask students to share their world or creature with the class and create a story as a class together.



Artwork projection by Blak Douglas on the Sydney Opera House Sails for World Oceans Day 2021

Reflection



Exit Questions

Primary students

What is one thing you learned about Sydney Harbour or the ocean?

If you could ask the ocean one question, what would it be?

How can you practice mindfulness in your day?

Key Learning Areas Curriculum Map – NSW Syllabus Outcomes

What the Ocean Said – Stage ES1 – 2

English Stage ES1 – 2 (Yr K – 4)	Creative Arts (Drama) Stage ES1 – 2 (Yr K – 4)	Creative Arts (Music) Stage ES1 – 2 (Yr K – 4)	HSIE Stage ES1 – 2 (Yr K – 4)	Science and Technology Stage ES1 – 2 (Yr K – 4)
ENE-OLC-01 Communicates effectively by using interpersonal conventions and language with familiar peers and adults	CAE-DRA-01 Experiments with and identifies ways feelings, ideas, roles and situations are embodied and enacted in drama	CAE-MUS-01 Experiments with and identifies ways sound is organised in music through singing, moving, playing instruments and using listening skills	HSE-GEO-01 identifies and locates places people connect with, using geographical information	STE-SCI-01 Identifies and describes characteristics of living things, properties of materials, and movement
ENE-UARL-01 Understands and responds to literature read to them	CA1-DRA-01 Makes and performs drama to embody and enact characters, ideas and stories, and describes ways that drama communicates ideas	CA1-MUS-01 Performs, uses listening skills and composes to communicate ideas through sound, and describes ways musical ideas are conveyed	HSE-ACH-01 Identifies ways that Aboriginal Peoples connect with Country, Culture and Community	ST1-SCI-01 Measures and describes changes in living things, materials, movement, Earth and the sky
EN1-OLC-01 Communicates effectively by using interpersonal conventions and language to extend and elaborate ideas for social and learning interactions	CA2-DRA-01 Makes and performs drama to embody and enact characters, ideas and stories for an audience, and describes ways the dramatic elements are used to convey meaning	CA2-MUS-01 Performs, uses listening skills and composes to communicate musical ideas, and describes ways the elements of music are used to convey musical ideas	HS1-ACH-01 Describes interactions between Aboriginal Peoples and Country	ST2-SCI-01 Uses information to investigate the solar system and the effects of energy on living, physical and geological systems
EN2-OLC-01 Communicates with familiar audiences for social and learning purposes, by interacting, understanding and presenting			HS1-GEO-01 Describes ways people connect to and care for places, water environments and each other, using geographical information	
			HS2-GEO-01 Explains how people care for Australia’s environments and participate in Australian society, using geographical information	