

### UNIT DESCRIPTION

This Primary (3-6) unit provides opportunities for young people to express their thoughts and feelings regarding human-induced climate change and envision possibilities for more sustainable futures. The unit uses drama conventions such as **transformation of time** and **whole-class role-play** to explore and share ideas, investigate problems, and suggest possible solutions. Students create and use time machines, embody possible futures, and reflect on ways to sustainably care for the places in which they live. This unit enables students to engage playfully and safely with challenging and complex issues.

### YEAR LEVEL

Primary: 3-6

### LEARNING AREAS

Drama

Science

Geography

### TIMEFRAME

1.5 hours (minimum). Can be divided over several sessions (suggestions are made for suitable places to pause). Could be further extended.

### RESOURCES

Brainstorming supplies (recycled Post-It notes, pieces of paper, textas, pens)

*Time to Act* [video](#) featuring Dr Al Fricker

Images of [past visions of the future](#)

# Collaborative Futuring (3-6)

*Actively Imagining Alternative Futures*

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Jo, Danielle, and Meg are passionate about the power of the arts to create change, particularly in the areas of environmental sustainability, climate change education, and de/colonising education. This unit was developed for the Time to Act Professional Learning Workshops, and has been adapted for school settings.

### LEARNING INTENTIONS

- Think and act creatively and collaboratively
- Create and perform drama that communicates ideas, perspectives, and meaning
- Consider environmental/climate problems, actions and responses humans can take, and possible impacts

### PREPARING THE SPACE AND STUDENTS

- You will need a large clear space for this unit. If students are unused to working physically in this space (e.g. you are using this unit in a Science class) spend more time on the *Warming Up* activities, particularly ones like *Walking in Space*, to relax students. Other sustainability-focused warm-up games can be found [here](#).
- Students will be engaging deeply with challenging and complex environmental/climate problems. Let parents/guardians know so that they can offer support at home if needed.

*Collaborative Futuring* was first developed by Jo and Meg in 2023 as part of the core Time to Act program. It has been adapted for the Time to Act Curriculum Library.

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## ACKNOWLEDGING COUNTRY

- Acknowledge the **Country** that you are on. With younger students (Lvl 3-4), you may like to draw on some of these [Children's Acknowledgement of Country](#) ideas. Ask students to think about and share ways in which Traditional Owners take care of the Country you live on.
- With older students (5-6), you may like to watch the *Time to Act* [video](#) (5:23 min) featuring Dja Dja Wurrung academic Dr Al Fricker. Watch the video yourself first to judge whether it is suitable for your students. Ask students to reflect on their responses to this video using the following prompts:
  - What are three emotions that came up for you while watching?
  - What are two thoughts or questions that you have?
  - What is one action that the video made you want to take?

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## WARMING UP

### Where Do You Stand?

- Allocate one end of the room as Strongly Agree and the other as Strongly Disagree. The middle of the room is Not Sure. Invite students to stand in the place that reflects how important the following things are to them (modify as appropriate for your group):
  - *Include some light-hearted practice examples to get students used to the concept, e.g. 'dogs are better than cats', 'pineapple belongs on pizza', etc.*
  - Human activities affect the climate
  - I'm worried about big weather and climate events like storms, wildfires, floods, heatwaves, droughts, and Arctic/Antarctic ice melting
  - Most kids I know are worried about climate change
  - We already have the knowledge and technology to fix or reduce climate change
  - I am hopeful for the future
  - I am already doing things/I want to do things to help take care of the environment
- After each prompt, allow 1-2 minutes for discussion and sharing.

### Walking in Space

- Invite students to walk randomly through the space without touching anyone or anything. Experiment with different tempos (fast, slow) and directions (straight lines, curved, etc.).
- Give instructions, e.g. 'Stop', 'Go', 'Jump', 'Clap'. Once students are used to following these instructions, reverse them (Stop = Go, Jump = Clap, etc.).

### 10-Second Instructions

- Flowing directly on from the previous activity (Walking in Space), ask students to form groups of a particular number and create a **tableau** of an object or place. Once students have created the tableau, ask them to add an additional **element of drama** or **expressive skill**. For example, "Form groups of...
  - ...three and create a motorbike. Add **sound**.
  - ...six and create a washing line waving in the breeze. Add **movement**.
  - ...four and create a renewable energy source including movement and/or sound.
  - ...five and create a forest. **Transform** into an unhealthy forest.
  - ...10+ (half the class) and create a time machine (transition into first main activity described below).

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## SETTING THE SCENE

- Allow students 3-5 minutes to create their time machine. It should:
    - Include a way to enter and exit
    - Have an interactive control panel
    - Use movement and sound to show when you are travelling through time
  - Explain that you will play the role of the Time Traveler (**Teacher in Role**). Prompt the other half of the group that when you exit the machine, they will become the relevant time period (role-playing T-Rexes, giant plants, pterodactyls, etc.).
  - Enter the time machine and 'start' it using the control panel. Exit the machine and engage briefly with the past environment.
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- Re-enter the time machine to travel back to the present. Report back on your experiences.
- Decide as a class how far forward in time the second time machine will travel (e.g. 300 years in the future). Again, prompt the half of the class not acting the time machine to become the future. They can decide whether this future is dystopian, utopian, or something in between.
- Enter the second time machine and 'start' it. Exit the machine and engage with the future.
- Ask the people of the future for a message they want taken back to the 2020s (our present).
- Re-enter the time machine to travel back to the present. Report back on your experiences.
- Debrief/discuss this activity with the class.
  - Do we know what the future will be like?
  - Is there one certain future or lots of different possible futures?
  - What makes some futures more likely than others?

## INTRODUCING CONCEPTS

### *Futuring*

- Explain to students that **futuring** is a way to imagine and respond to possible futures. Imagined futures can be:
  - Probable (likely to happen based on current knowledge and trends)
  - Plausible (could happen)
  - Possible (might happen)
  - Preposterous (unlikely to happen)
- As a class, practice futuring together using a very close future. For example, what futures can you imagine happening at the end of class?
  - Probable: The bell rings and everyone eats their lunch and goes outside
  - Plausible: It suddenly starts raining so everyone has to stay inside today
  - Possible: The principal comes in and announces that we get a special chip lunch for being the best class
  - Preposterous: The classroom transforms into a spaceship and we blast off to explore the galaxy
- Brainstorm lots of ideas for each kind of future. Discuss what makes some futures more likely than others (for example, dark clouds gathering might change the rainy day from plausible to probable).
- Ask students how they could help to make possible futures more likely. For example, what would they need to do to make the special chip lunch from the principal probable?
- Use students' ideas to show how futuring creates a roadmap for the future: we use the information we have now to prepare for and influence what comes next.
- Ask students why futuring as a group would be better than futuring alone (e.g. multiple points of view, lots of ideas, etc).
- Examine images of [past visions of the future](#). Discussion questions could include:
  - What issues or challenges do you notice? How have these futurists suggested these issues might be solved? Were they right?
  - How are people relating to, changing, and/or managing their environments?
  - What technologies do you notice? How do they compare to real modern technologies?
- Remind students that the future is not certain; there are many possible alternative futures. Sometimes even preposterous or outlandish ideas can become possible.
- Brainstorm some dangerous, unjust, or irresponsible things we used to do as a society that we don't do anymore (e.g. not wearing seatbelts, restricting who can vote based on gender, race, and wealth, smoking in restaurants, etc.). Consider:
  - How did these changes occur?
  - How long did the changes take?
  - How possible do you think these changes felt before they occurred?

*NOTE:* If you need to break this part of the workshop up, *Introducing Concepts: Futuring* would be a good final OR starting activity (final activity of Session 1 or first activity of Session 2).

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## IMPROVISING

### Future News

- Ask students to imagine that you have time travelled to 2050. It is time for the climate news. Use a visual/audio prompt (e.g. a projected futuristic news desk, news stinger, etc.) to set the scene.
- Place students in pairs and ask them to decide who is A (reporter) and B (interviewee). Brainstorm ideas for interviewees (e.g. politicians, scientists, engineers, farmers, students).
- Give students 1-2 minutes to simultaneously improvise their interview.
- Use Teacher in Role as a news anchor to spotlight different interviews, for example:  
*Good evening, and welcome to Climate News. A lot is happening right now and our journalists are in the field to tell you all about it. We're crossing now to...Over to you, X...*
- Once everyone has shared, debrief/discuss with the class:
  - Was the future news generally hopeful or sad?
  - What problems (e.g. weather events, pollution, etc.) were focused on?
  - How were humans responding to these problems?
  - How had the environment changed?

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## EMBODYING

### Museum of the Future

- Using Teacher in Role as the news anchor, announce that an exciting new museum is about to open, celebrating the progress we've made in improving sustainability.
- Place students in groups of 5-6 and ask them to create a museum exhibit/diorama (a **tableau** that comes to life). Their exhibit should:
  - Show a problem that was occurring in 2024 or before where human activity was affecting the climate and/or environment.
  - Include movement and sound.
  - Include a guide who can explain the exhibit to visitors.
- Allow students 5-10 minutes to devise and develop their exhibits.
- As a class, travel around the different exhibits, listening to the guides and asking questions as appropriate. Remember and remind students to stay in character as people in 2050.
- Discuss in character:
  - Do these problems still exist in 2050? If not, how have we solved them?
  - What impacts have our responses had?

### Where Does Responsibility Lie?

- Choose one of the exhibits (teacher-led or as a class) to unpack more.
  - Invite the exhibit to re-form in the centre of the room. Make sure they are physically comfortable as they will have to stay there for some time.
  - Guide the rest of the class to identify and embody interconnections and relationships to this problem. For example, if the problem is 'littering', other students might take on roles as seagulls, microplastics in oceans, busy parents, lazy kids, etc.
  - Once everyone has identified and taken on a role (more than one student can play the same role), ask everyone to fully embody that role. Spotlight different students around the room and ask them to verbalise:
    - Who/what are they?
    - What are they feeling/thinking?
    - What is their motivation/desire/hope?
  - Relax roles and discuss as a class:
    - Where does the responsibility lie for this problem?
    - Where are the opportunities for change?
    - What actions/responses do they suggest?
    - What might be some of the impacts of these actions?
  - Reflect on past problems that humanity has addressed (from *Introducing Concepts*).
  - Ask students to re-embody their roles. Spotlight different students and ask them to verbalise a change that their role could/should make.
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### Stepping Outside

- Invite students to close or lower their eyes to create focus. Explain using Teacher in Role that we have been inside the Museum of the Future, but now we're about to step out into the world of 2050. In this future we have managed to address some, if not all, of the climate/environmental problems of the 2020s (our present). Ask students to reflect on what the world of 2050 looks, feels, sounds, smells, and tastes like.
- Invite students to simultaneously step forward and embody someone or something from this more sustainable future (could be a person, plant, animal, idea, value, mineral, etc.).
- Spotlight briefly on each student and ask them to share who/what they are.

*NOTE:* This is a good place to pause/finish this section. Allow time to debrief/come out of role. Reflect on emotions experienced, thoughts/questions they now have, and actions they would like to take (similar to reflection from Acknowledging Country).

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### RESEARCHING, CREATING & PRESENTING

This unit could finish with stepping outside the Museum of the Future. Alternatively, you could continue this work (two options are suggested below). These options could be undertaken with minimal research and 20-30 minutes planning/rehearsal time, or you could extend them through multiple lessons and use the final performance as an interdisciplinary assessment task.

#### Option 1: Conference of the Future

- Explain to students that, as a class, you will be creating a conference in 2050, celebrating 25 years of progress towards climate justice. Students will play roles of delegates and presenters at the conference. Each presentation will include a holographic slide presentation, video, interview, or similar.
- Organise students into groups of six and provide each group with the following instructions:
  - Select a climate/environment problem from the present (mid-2020s) to address.
  - Decide on your roles. These can include the more-than-human (perhaps in the future we've worked out how to listen to animals/the environment).
  - Research your problem, including important interconnections and relationships.
  - Propose an action or response that will help to improve sustainability. Consider possible human actions, technological innovations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' sustainability practices. What possible impacts might your actions/responses have?
  - Your presentation takes place 25 years in the future, when these actions/responses has been implemented. Develop a short presentation, including a holographic slide presentation, video, interview, or similar (drama performance) that addresses the following questions:
    - What is the problem?
    - Who are you? What is your relationship to the problem?
    - What actions/responses have you implemented/are you implementing?
    - What impacts is it having?
    - What remains to be done?
- Share these presentations as a whole class roleplay, with Teacher in Role as the conference convenor, introducing and facilitating each group's presentation. Allow time for questions from other delegates (students who aren't presenting at the time).

#### Option 2: Managing Places

- Similar to the above, with groups of students representing different local places and the people/more-than-human beings that use them. Have each group pick a place with clear environmental issues or challenges and propose science/evidence-based actions or responses to local/state government. As part of their presentation, include a short drama showing possible impacts of their actions (how the place changes in the future).

After students have presented, allow time for coming out of role, debriefing, and reflecting on experiences. A reflective activity is suggested below.

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**DE-ROLING/REFLECTING**

- Invite students to lie down on the floor or find a place where they can sit comfortably and close their eyes. You may like to play some relaxing music. Guide students through this reflective meditation:
  - Take some deep breaths in and out, allowing the air to fill every part of your body, relaxing tense muscles, and feeling your body sink into the 'earth' around you.
  - Reflect on the emotions you have experienced today. Try to name three different emotions you have felt throughout the session. After you have named each emotion, allow it to leave your body with your breath.
  - Focus in on your mind. What thoughts are running through your brain? What questions do you have? Articulate these clearly (you may like to imagine them written on a piece of paper) then file them away. Give your brain permission to become still.
  - Consider your body. What actions are you inspired to take? What could you put into practice straight away? Today or tomorrow? Choose one achievable action, and imagine it sinking into the earth around you, as a commitment to the planet.
- This reflection can stay internal or be shared with the class. To share, invite students to sit up and verbalise one or more of the emotions they have experienced. Not everyone will want to share but allow enough time for anyone who wants to do so.
- Ask students to turn to a partner and share one of the thoughts or questions. These don't need to be discussed, just heard.
- Physicalise your action in a frozen or moving image. Practice what it feels like to actually do what you committed to do.
- Share the following quote with students:

*What will future generations think of us? Perhaps they will see us as selfish and myopic. Or perhaps they will look back on us with gratitude, for the steps we took to leave them a better world. The choice is ours.*

William MacAskill (2022, August 16). How future generations will remember us: History is a long series of moral abominations. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/08/future-generations-climate-change-pandemics-ai/671148/>

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LVL 5 AND 6	<p>explore how drama can be used to communicate ideas, perspectives and dramatic meaning <b>VC2ADR6E01</b></p> <p>develop and document practices in expressive and performance skills, the elements of drama and design to communicate stories, narrative and dramatic meaning <b>VC2ADR6D01</b></p>	<p>create devised drama that develops story and narrative using expressive and performance skills, styles, form and design areas <b>VC2ADR6C01</b></p> <p>rehearse and present devised drama in informal to engage different audiences <b>VC2ADR6P01</b></p>	<p>scientific knowledge, skills and data can be used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions <b>VC2S6H02</b></p>	<p>sudden geological changes or extreme weather conditions can affect Earth's surface and atmosphere; the impacts of natural hazards, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, wildfires and floods, can be reduced by human actions and technological innovations <b>VC2S6U06</b></p>	<p>how places and environments are changed and managed by people <b>VC2HG6K01</b></p> <p>the importance of sustainability to places and environments, including the custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country and Place and how it influences their sustainability practices <b>VC2HG6K04</b></p>	<p>develop evidence-based conclusions on the management of places using the concepts of place, interconnection, environment and sustainability <b>VC2HG6S05</b></p>
	LVL 3 AND 4	<p>explore how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples use drama and storytelling to communicate connection to and responsibility for Country and Place <b>VC2ADR4E02</b></p> <p>develop and refine expressive and performance skills by using the elements of drama to develop ideas for dramatic action <b>VC2ADR4D01</b></p>	<p>devise drama using expressive skills, performance skills and elements of drama to communicate ideas, perspectives and meaning <b>VC2ADR4C01</b></p> <p>present and share improvised and devised drama to audiences in informal settings <b>VC2ADR4P01</b></p>	<p>scientific knowledge, skills and data can be used by people to explain how they will meet a need or solve a problem <b>VC2S4H02</b></p>	<p>weather events and climate have impacts on the land, air, water and living things; human activity can affect climate <b>VC2S4U08</b></p>	<p>the relationships between people and their place and its environment <b>VC2HG4K01</b></p> <p>sustainability and its application to the use of natural resources and the management of waste <b>VC2HG4K09</b></p>
	<b>Exploring and Developing Practices</b>	<b>Creating and Presenting</b>	<b>Use and Influence of Science</b>	<b>Earth and Space Sciences</b>	<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	<b>Skills</b>
	<b>DRAMA</b>		<b>SCIENCE</b>		<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>	

## GLOSSARY

<b>COUNTRY</b>	The lands, waterways, and sky to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected, as well as the laws/lores, places, customs, language, beliefs, cultural practices, and so on associated with that land.
<b>DE-ROLING</b>	Consciously coming out of character and returning to your own self/identity.
<b>DESIGN AREAS</b>	Design areas (also <i>production areas</i> ) are the technical aspects used within a performance. There are many design areas, including costume, lighting, make-up, masks, props, puppetry, set pieces, sound design, and projection.
<b>CONVENTIONS</b>	Conventions are drama techniques that are incorporated into a performance; for example, speaking directly to the audience, using exaggerated movement, singing, tableaux, etc. Drama conventions are often associated with a particular style or form; for example, silence and exaggerated movement are associated with the style Mime.
<b>ELEMENTS OF DRAMA</b>	Elements of drama (also <i>dramatic elements</i> ) are essential features of every performance. Actors manipulate dramatic elements to shape and enhance meaning. The elements of drama in the Victorian Curriculum are character and relationships, climax, conflict, context, setting, contrast, dramatic meaning, mood, sound, space, time, symbol and tension.
<b>EXPRESSIVE SKILLS</b>	Expressive skills are used to create and express a character. They can be used in different ways in different <i>drama styles</i> . They include voice, movement, gesture, facial expression, and stillness and silence.
<b>FUTURING</b>	Imagining, exploring, and responding to potential futures. <b>Futurists</b> are people who practice the art and science of futuring.
<b>PERFORMANCE SKILLS</b>	Performance skills are used to communicate story, enhance meaning, and realise intention in drama works and theatre performances. Performance skills include actor–audience relationship, energy, focus and timing.
<b>ROLE-PLAY</b>	Pretending to be a particular character(s) and to behave and react in the way that the character would. Can be done individually, in pairs or small groups, and/or as a whole class.
<b>SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC ISSUES</b>	Socio-scientific issues are complex, often controversial, challenges that combine scientific and social concerns (e.g. climate change).
<b>TABLEAUX (ALSO FREEZEFRAME, FROZEN IMAGE)</b>	A 'living picture'. A <i>convention</i> involving telling a story by freezing in position. Can be done individually or in a group. To tell the story clearly, performers should use strong <i>expressive skills</i> : facial expressions, exaggerated physical shapes, and different levels (e.g. standing, crouching, kneeling).
<b>TEACHER IN ROLE (TIR)</b>	Teacher takes on a role related to the story, participating directly in the role-play. TIR is particularly useful as a way to challenge the students or introduce conflict.
<b>TRANSFORMATION (DRAMA)</b>	A <i>convention</i> involving changing from one character, time, place, or object to another within a story. For example, changing from a fish to a bird; travelling to the past or future; shifting from a pond to a city office; turning the same piece of cloth into a frog's egg and then into a lily pad.