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### **To enable teachers to have easy access to the songs (both written and sung) used in the Musical Activities, the following resource books have been used:**

*Extending the Creative Arts in the K-6 Classroom* (1997) by D. Russell-Bowie.  
Sydney: Karibuni Press.

*Music is Everywhere* (1989) by D. Russell-Bowie. Sydney: Educational Supplies.

*The Essential Arts Handbook* (1993) by D. Russell-Bowie, N. Norman  
and V. Madsen. Sydney: Karibuni Press.

*The Creative Arts Handbook* (1997) by D. Russell-Bowie, N. Norman, V. Madsen, N. Graham  
and T. Trevisan. Sydney: Karibuni Press.

*Upbeat* (various dates) by Jeffrey Leask, Ashton Scholastic

The ABC *Sing* books from 1982 - 1998

### **Creative Arts Activities in this book have been adapted, with permission, from the following books:**

*Creative Librarians Make a Difference to Bookweek* (1996) by D. Russell-Bowie.  
Sydney: Karibuni Press.

*Creative Arts Activities for Bookweek 1997* (1997) by D. Russell-Bowie. Sydney: Karibuni Press.

*Creative Arts Activities for Bookweek 1998* (1998) by D. Russell-Bowie. Sydney: Karibuni Press.

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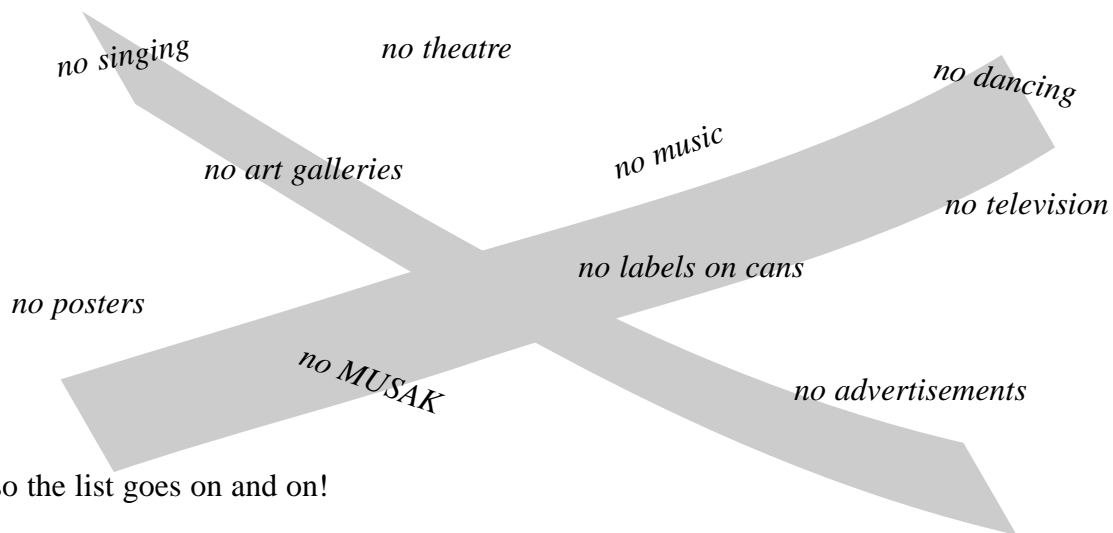
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# Teaching Literacy Through the Creative Arts

## Introduction

Dr Deirdre Russell-Bowie

Imagine a world without the arts:



... and so the list goes on and on!

Consciously and sub-consciously we are all continually immersed in a culture which embraces all art forms. Through the arts we gain information, sell products, enjoy leisure time, learn about different cultures and different times, express our innermost feelings and thoughts and share in the dreams and experiences of others.

Millions of dollars are spent on the arts every year in Australia, as the arts are used as vehicles for consumerism, teaching, pleasure, performance, self expression, information sharing, earning a living, consciousness raising, and many more significant end products.

Where, then, are the arts in our schools? Do they have the all-encompassing pervasiveness and prominence that is their place in society? Our policies affirm that they are important, but often there is little time for music, for dancing, for drama or for visual arts. Those who can afford lessons, teachers, facilities and instruments have often more to show in regards to arts education, but what of those without the resources for a strong arts education program? How can we ensure that ALL children, regardless of their background and experience, can enjoy the arts as part of their schooling and education? Where do we find the time and resources to do this?

Is it possible to bring the arts into every subject in the curriculum? How can generalist teachers integrate the arts subjects with English, as well as science, maths, technology, and society and environment, given their perceived lack of confidence and competence in one or all of the arts areas? Maybe it is safer to fall back on the 'tried and true' methods of talking, writing, reading and listening to teach our children literacy and other skills.

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What about the child who learns best through music or through movement, or the child who may not be able to sequence a story verbally but could do it successfully after drawing pictures of, or dramatising the different events? What about those children whose learning strengths are not in the logistical, mathematical or linguistic areas, which often seem to be favoured in our classrooms, but who learn best through interaction with others, or by drawing, singing, moving or doing hands-on activities?

By bringing the creative arts into the literacy classroom, every child will find that they are given opportunities to express themselves and learn effectively within their particular learning style or preferred intelligence. Literacy learning experiences will be varied and fun and will cater for all children - the ESL child, the gifted pupil or one who has difficulty reading, the shy child and the student with special needs - all will find success and enjoyment in the challenge of learning through one or more of these activities.

This book is packed full of Creative Arts activities based on a wide range of top quality children's books, which your library should have as they are taken from the Children's Book Council Shortlist for the Children's Book of the Year Awards in 1996, 1997 and 1998. The activities are designed to bring music, movement, drama and visual arts into the primary classroom to make the books come alive and to promote quality literacy learning experiences for your children, as they are used to complement and extend your planned literacy program.

Each set of Creative Arts activities is also annotated, (eg. RS2.5 or TS2.1, etc) to indicate how they are related to the Talking, Listening, Reading and Writing outcomes from the 1998 NSW English K-6 Syllabus. They are mainly aimed at Stages 1 and 2 (Years 1 - 4), but depending on your class and their abilities and experience, these suggested levels of outcomes may easily be taken up or down a level. Although many of the writing outcomes which relate to grammar and punctuation, handwriting, computer technology and spelling are not listed against activities, it would be expected that, depending on the technology available and the skills of the children, these outcomes would also be relevant to many of the activities. Outcomes relating to context and text as well as language structures and features have not been included as it is presumed that these would be dealt with in the teachers' initial literacy activities based specifically on the books being used.

To implement these activities you will need few resources, and you don't have to be talented musically or artistically! Song suggestions are taken from a limited range of music resource kits (books and cassettes) which most schools would have in their library. Visual arts resources are limited to those which most classrooms would have access to, although a few activities use more specialised equipment to challenge the brighter child and/ or the school with a wider variety of resources. Dance and drama activities generally need only a little room to move plus some very simple resources which are easily obtained from the store room or from home.

Activities can be used and adapted to suit most ages across the primary school and as they are implemented, not only will children's literacy skills be developed and improved, but they will be learning about music, dance, drama and visual arts, as well as developing emotionally, physically, cognitively, socially and creatively, all of which will form a firm foundation for their later years. So go ahead - take the challenge - find the books in your library, be creative with your teaching, and have fun!

**Dr Deirdre Russell-Bowie**

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April 1999

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# The First Fleet

*Author/Illustrator: John Nicholson  
Published by Allen and Unwin*

Filled with practical detail in drawings and text, this is the book to read to discover the beginning of modern Australia. As children read this book, they will discover why the British government wanted to start a settlement in remote, unknown Australia; what the ships looked like; who was with them; what the settlers took and what they left behind; what they did in the very first days; how they got on with the Iora people, the Aboriginal inhabitants of the land; what and how they built; and why people in the colony nearly starved in those first four years.

## Music (RS2.5)

Listen to the song 'Bound for Botany Bay'. (ABC *Time to Sing* (1983) and *Sing On* (1985); *The Creative Arts Handbook* by D. Russell-Bowie, 1997: Karibuni Press).

### *Duration*

Have children join in the chorus and keep the beat on their knees softly, during the verses.

Read through and discuss the lyrics of the song.  
Learn to sing the song all the way through.

### *Duration / Structure*

In small groups, have one group play instruments to the beat during each chorus, and have the other groups play for one verse each, to show the structure of the song.

## Dance (TS2.1)

Discuss the different steps used in folkdancing. Create a movement sequence of 16 steps for the verses, and another, different movement sequence of 16 steps for the chorus. Have half the class form a circle and perform the dance while the other half sings the song. Swap over.

