

# Learning activities: Writer

## Specific learning outcomes

Students will:

- understand key influences on Beckett's writing
- explore the purposes Beckett had in writing this play
- analyse the use of the universal setting and characters in the purpose of the play.

These learning outcomes relate to the strand Understanding Drama in Context (UC) in *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*.

## Activity 1: What's it all about?

- As a class, discuss the ideas in the play. What is the point of writing a play where nothing really happens?
- Read the document entitled 'About the play'.
- **Hotseating Beckett:** In groups, hotseat Samuel Beckett. The context is a forum after the performance of the play. You will need people to play the roles of the interviewer (a well-known theatre critic and expert on theatre of the absurd), Beckett, and members of the audience. The audience will participate in the discussion by asking questions and giving opinions of the play. You might like to choose a range of characters for your audience members, such as:
  - school student
  - drama teacher
  - actor
  - grannie on a birthday outing (who thought that the play was going to be a musical).
- You will each need to prepare questions, answers, and opinions to use as your lines during the forum. You will need to do some planning as a group, then rehearse your roles and lines.
- Present your version of the forum to your classmates.

## Activity 2: Anti-Godot

*Waiting for Godot* is intended to be played in a neutral space by characters representative of 'everyman'. Your task is to find a

context for the scene called 'Boots' (Script extract 3) and to give the roles for Vladimir and Estragon clearly defined characters.

- To help you do this, record the specific setting in your portfolio and create the setting with specific objects. You may choose to use a setting in your environment or to represent a setting on a stage.
- Discuss your characters in detail, deciding on their ages, occupations, family situations, and motivation. Rehearse your scene, then perform and video it.

Review the video, and discuss how the text worked when it was placed in a specific context.