

Learning activities:

World of the play

Specific learning outcomes

Students will:

- research and understand existentialist ideas and how they are represented in the theatre of the absurd
- identify and respond to the absurdist elements in the play.

These learning outcomes relate to the Communication and Interpreting in Drama (CI) and Understanding Drama in Context (UC) strands in *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*.

Activity: 3: Exploring existentialism

- Read the notes on [existentialism](#) and the [theatre of the absurd](#).
- Add to your knowledge by researching these topics using your library and the Internet.
- List key ideas in the following table.

| Topic | Facts | Explanation |
|--|-------|-------------|
| Key people: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Philosophers• Playwrights | | |
| Events in history that influenced existentialists | | |
| Key ideas explored by existentialists | | |
| Important absurdist plays | | |

Activity 4: Chewing the fat

Existentialist philosophers have spent much time considering these questions:

- What is the point in life?
- Why is there something rather than nothing?

- Why do I exist?
- Head up large sheets of paper with these questions and use crayons to write down your ideas.
- As a class, listen to each other's ideas.
- Do you agree with the existentialist philosophers' view of life?

Activity 5: Verbatim

Discuss the themes in existentialism to which the following quotes from the play could be linked.

ESTRAGON Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR I'm beginning to come around to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me saying, Vladimir, be reasonable. You haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle.

ESTRAGON We came here yesterday.

VLADIMIR Ah, no, there you're mistaken.

ESTRAGON What did we do yesterday?

VLADIMIR What did we do yesterday?

ESTRAGON Yes.

VLADIMIR Why... Nothing is certain when you're about.

| | |
|-------|---|
| LUCKY | Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal god quaquaquaqua with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reason unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire... |
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