Little Red Meets the Dingo

By Jacquelin Melilli

For primary/secondary students

Contents

Little Red Meets the Dingo

About this Series

This **Lights, Camera, Action!** series is designed as an informative starting point for creating professional dramatic arts performances through either film, stage play, radio show or puppet show. Each book contains an award winning script that is highly entertaining as well as topical. Comprehensive ideas and recommendations have been given throughout the series for making the most of these plays.

There are four titles in this series:

- **Little Red Meets the Dingo**
- **Foreigners in Oztralia**
- **Can Anybody Hear Me?**
- **Goldisocks and the Three Koalas**

Each book in the series contains a full script that can be performed as either a screen play, stage play, radio or puppet show. Because many of the production roles are similar for each of the performances above, this information has been kept in one section and should be followed for all forms of the play. Presenting the material in this manner, allows you to decide what options to go with for your production (e.g. film, stage, radio or puppet show).

Production Roles

Many of the behind the scenes roles are similar in nature (e.g. sound effects, costume design) and can be applied to any type of performance. Specific roles (e.g. **film editor** for a film, **stage manager** for a stage play) have been given special mention where relevant.

Making a Film

This book contains very useful introductory notes on film production roles, storyboarding, camera shots, shooting sequences, editing a film and much more. You will note that the shooting sequences varies from the actual script so it is recommended that you read the full script (see Page 37) before being able to understand the suggested shooting script (see Page 23).

Stage Play

Extensive guidelines for staging a play are included as well as a section on stage directions for organising the entrance and exits of cast members.

Puppet Show and Radio Show Play

Information is provided specific to producing the plays in this manner, however, the book mainly concentrates on requirements for film and stage play production. Much of this stage and film information can be applied to radio and puppet shows. There is much less work involved in putting on a radio play as there is no need for costumes or set design, lights, film etc. However, a thorough understanding of the script is an important part of preparation. This can be achieved by completing the student activity sheets on Pages 27-33. A radio play relies heavily on a director's interpretation of the script and the actors' interpretation of the characters.

A puppet show is similar to a stage production with the exception that it's the puppets who are seen by the audience rather than the actors, so directions for putting on a stage production should be followed.

Activity Pages

To allow students a better understanding of characterisation, photocopiable activity pages have been included. Ideally, these sheets should be used early on, once an initial read-through of the full script has occurred.

Teachers' Notes

A Successful Production Begins with a Good Script

Half the battle of creating a production is the time-consuming task of writing a good script. An effective script should be clear and easy for the audience to follow and preferably have a solid message that will stay in the mind of the audience. Dialogue should flow and be natural and the characters should be interesting and memorable. Finally, it needs to be entertaining with bursts of energy to keep the pace exciting. This makes *choosing* a good script a much easier task than writing one.

Little Red Meets the Dingo is a play with subtle messages about the dangers of Internet chat rooms, being an only child, juggling a career and single parenting. It is an extremely funny play to rehearse and perform, which makes the seriousness of the message behind it not seem preachy to young performers and the audience.

Why is drama so beneficial?

Drama

Drama is a great way to learn about human behaviour and, if delved into, can be quite complex with aspects of psychology being used to understand the characters portrayed. Understanding human behaviour is empowering as it allows students to better understand themselves and their peers, which in itself builds self-confidence. Drama also helps tremendously with communicating self-expression in a non-threatening way by enabling the actors to self examine their own feelings when portraying a character. Most actors are attracted to roles that they can relate to in one way or another.

Not everyone likes to perform in front of an audience, yet most enjoy watching performances and having participated in the production in some way can be very rewarding. Ideally, encourage engaging the talents of the whole class to work behind the scenes in one way or another.

Using **Little Red Meets the Dingo** in the classroom:

Readers

Using the stage play as part of a reading program is a fun way to get students to enjoy reading. A read through would involve each student reading a section of the script, whether it is one line of dialogue or the action description. The script can then be read around the class and then continued from the first student down to the last again. In using this method, no set student plays a particular character role. Once students get through the first round, you'll find some interesting voices will emerge! After the read through, work through the accompanying student activities: **Analysing Characters/Character Profiles** sheets and the **Story Comprehension Activity Sheet** provided on Pages 30-33.

Radio Play

Students can work in groups to create the most interesting voices for the characters and record them on CD to be presented as a radio play. This is a very good exercise in helping children express themselves via use of their voice. Those students, who do not like acting in any form, will still be needed to create the sound effects and music required for background noise.

Theatre Production

Involves the whole class in the process of putting on a production and the importance of working as a team for successful results. This book contains detailed sections on what will be required.

Puppet Show

Students can work in groups with some being voice actors and others in charge of music, lights and sound effects. Puppets can be made by the students or dolls and stuffed animals can be turned into puppets and dressed accordingly.

Film Production

For the more ambitious, and for those who have access to a digital film camera and editing software, an introduction into filmmaking has been included. Making a film is a lot more involved and time consuming and therefore the project can be done over the year or over three terms. Choosing a short script of around 30 minutes is sufficient. It is strongly recommended that you **shoot** the scenes in a blocked period of two or three days to keep with continuity. If you shoot it over weeks or months you will get all sorts of problems such as the actor's hair growing, a pimple that wasn't previously there and so on – the list is endless. If all the preparation has been done thoroughly prior to shooting, there should not be any problems with shooting the script in two days and allowing a third day for any re-shoots or scenes the director is not completely happy about.

Then again, you may not want to take the film project too seriously, but simply use it as a means of experimenting with the camera, angles, using different directors and comparing how differently each one would shoot a scene. You may want to break students up into groups and allocate them a scene each for filming. Use different actors and allow everyone to take on different roles in the crew – after all, it is only an introduction to filmmaking. We all need to start somewhere. Playing around first allows you to get a good feel for it.

For more information on putting on a stage play, radio play, puppet show or making a film visit:
www.jacquelinmelilli.com

Curriculum Links

New South Wales – Creative Arts
Strands: Drama: DRAS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, DRAS 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

South Australia – Arts
Strands:
Arts Practice - 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3; Arts Analysis and Response – 2.4
Arts in Contexts – 2.6

Victoria – The Arts
Strand: Performing Arts
Sub-strand: Arts practice – ideas, skills, techniques and processes: 2.1, 3.1
Sub-strand: Responding to the arts – criticism, aesthetics and contexts – 2.2, 3.2

Queensland – The Arts
Strand: Drama; Level 2 Core: DR 2.1, DR 2.2, DR 2.3; Discretionary: DDR 2.4
Level 3 Core: DR 3.1, DR 3.2, DR 3.3

Western Australia – The Arts
Strand: Communicating arts ideas; CAI 2, CAI 3
Strand: Using arts skills, techniques, technologies and processes; STP 2, STP 3
Strand: Responding, reflecting on and evaluating the arts; RRE 2, RRE 3, RRE 4

NT, ACT and Tas. (National Curriculum) – The Arts
Strand: Drama
Creating, Making and Presenting: Band B; Past and Present Contexts: Band B

Production Roles

Producer The producer is responsible for raising funds, publicity, overseeing the budget and is overall in charge of the production. All decisions must be reported back to the producer. It is recommended that the teacher take this role with possibly an assistant producer to "learn the ropes", especially where budgeting is concerned. A producer will need to draw up a budget with all the foreseen expenses listed and then calculate the cost of each ticket to recoup expenses and make a profit that may be set aside for the next production.

Director Creates the vision of how the play/film is to be performed. Works as head of the production team to approve cast, costumes, set construction, lighting, sound, movement on stage/set, appearance of the stage/set, etc.

Assistant Director **(Film)** Carries out tasks set out by the director, such as organising casting calls and rehearsals; making sure the actors are ready to go on set; making sure everything runs smoothly and sorting out problems as they arise.

Stage Manager **(Theatre)** Is the first to arrive at the theatre prior to a performance and the last to leave the theatre after a performance. A stage manager oversees all activities on the stage and is responsible for any problems that may arise during a performance. Prior to a performance, the stage manager thoroughly checks all scenery, props, costumes, lighting and sound to make sure everything is ready and in place for the performance. The stage manager arranges for the actors to be at the theatre at least an hour prior to performance and advises actors of "half hour curtain call", "fifteen minute curtain call", "five minute curtain call" and finally advises the actors to take their places prior to calling "Curtain!". The stage manager must also communicate with the lighting and sound directors and the ushers to make sure everything is ready prior to calling "curtain".

Costume Designer Chooses team members to help design costumes and make the necessary arrangements to obtain them. This may mean compiling a note to send home to parents with detailed information/drawings of what exactly is needed. Second hand clothing shops are an excellent place to find costumes, wigs and even props! You may also be able to get the co-operation of the Textiles and Design class to make costumes for the production.

Make-Up , Hair Artists Chooses team to help with putting on make-up, styling hair and wigs. A basic make-up kit should consist of: foundation (to suit character), powder, make-up pencils for brow and lips, brushes and sponges, make-up remover and hair spray. Most actors will already have these items and may prefer to bring their own make-up bag to rehearsals.

Set Designer Chooses team to design the set as per the director's instructions. This may be as simple as choosing class members who are talented artists to paint backdrops, on either butcher's paper or suitable fabric to be hung as a background. Props can also be made from cardboard boxes, papier mâché, etc.

Prop Assistant/s

Need to organise props and familiarise themselves with the script to make sure props are in place when required during the performance. Must have replacement props organised in case any prop gets damaged or lost. Must be at every rehearsal.

Prompter/s

Must be very familiar with the script and actions of actors. Responsible for prompting actors quietly from backstage if they forget their lines. Must be at every rehearsal.

Lighting Director

Works with the director to create appropriate lighting and mood during the performance. The lighting director must be familiar with the script and be present at every rehearsal.

Sound Director

Works with the director to create appropriate sound effects or music to accompany production. Special care must be taken to come in exactly on cue with music or sound effects. Must be very familiar with scripts and be at every rehearsal.

Fundraiser/s

Funds may need to be raised depending on the scale of the production. A budget will need to be worked out and discussed between the director and producer. Playing Theatre Sports is a fun way to raise funds. For more information visit: **www.jacquelinmelilli.com**

Stage Directions

It is good practice for the director to use the correct referrals for directions on stage. Refer to the diagram below and ensure everyone has a copy. A fun warm-up game prior to rehearsals is for the director to call out a section of the stage randomly and have the actors run to that section as quickly as possible.

The back of the stage:
UPPER STAGE RIGHT, UPPER STAGE CENTRE, UPPER STAGE LEFT

The centre of the stage:
CENTRE STAGE RIGHT, CENTRE STAGE, CENTRE STAGE LEFT

The front of the stage: (closest to the audience)
DOWN STAGE RIGHT, DOWN STAGE CENTRE, DOWN STAGE LEFT

Note:

The director who is watching/directing the actors from the audience's point of view must remember that his/her RIGHT is the actor's LEFT hand side. So care must be taken when giving instructions to actors so as not to cause confusion.
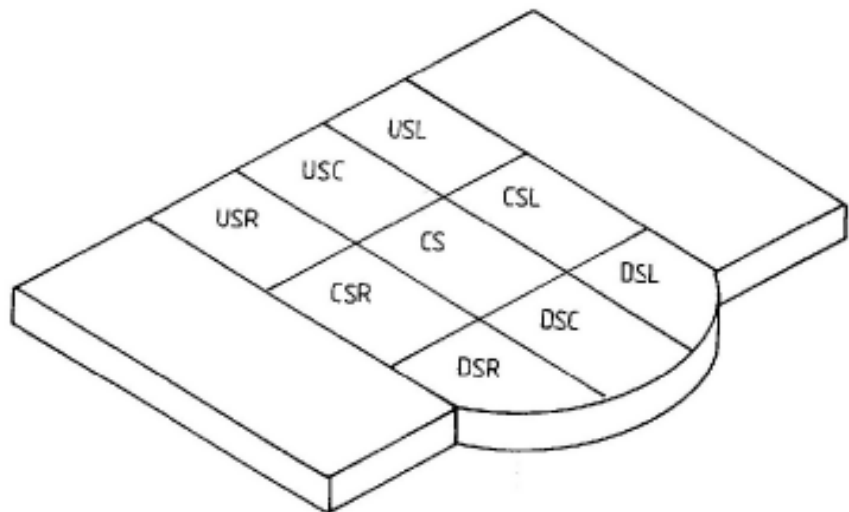
Storyboarding the Script

For Film Production: The director and storyboard artists will need to work together to sort out how the shots will be filmed. As this is quite a time-consuming task, this process should begin at the same time as rehearsals. It would be a good idea to have the storyboard artists present at rehearsals so they can listen in to the director guiding the actors. They can then create the storyboard according to these instructions.

The director would have a vision of how he/she wants the story viewed by the audience which is where the use of "Close-up", "Long Shots", etc. comes in. If the director wants the audience to see a particular expression on an actor's face, he/she would choose a close-up shot. If the director wants to emphasise an action, he/she would choose a longer/wider shot. Storyboarding all of these shots makes it clearer to the camera operator and crew involved on exactly how to set up each shot when filming begins. This saves valuable time further down the track when weather conditions or time limits can affect the shoot. **See the illustrations on the following page for examples.**

The Story Board

Picture 1. CLOSE-UP: Biker puts helmet on

Picture 2. LONG SHOT: Biker rides towards camera, race banner in background

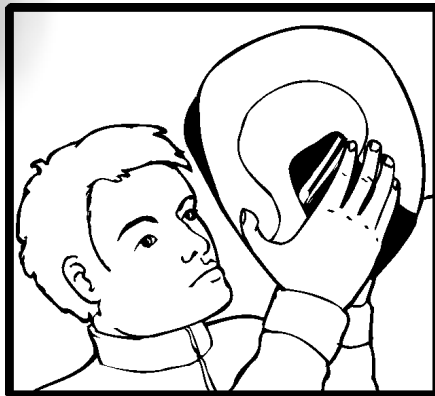**Picture 3. MID SHOT: Profile - biker rides to screen right**

Picture 4. VERY LONG SHOT: Biker rides to screen right
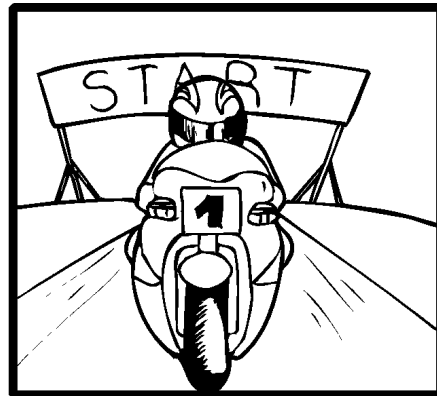
Picture 5. CLOSE-UP: Boot on pedal

Picture 6. CLOSE-UP: Exhaust pipe shooting flames

Picture 7. LONG SHOT: From rear, biker rides towards finish line
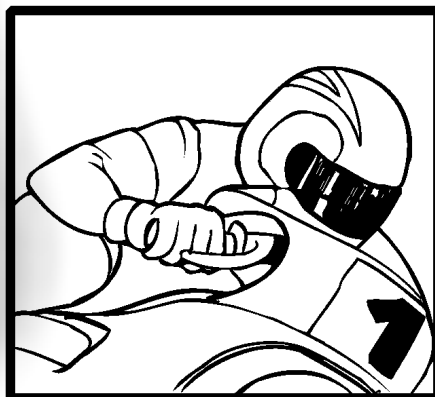
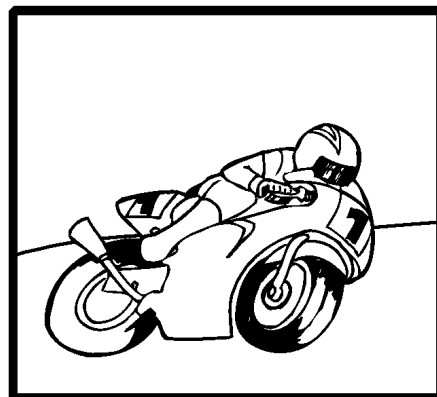**Picture 8. CLOSE-UP: Biker's head as he passes finish line flag**
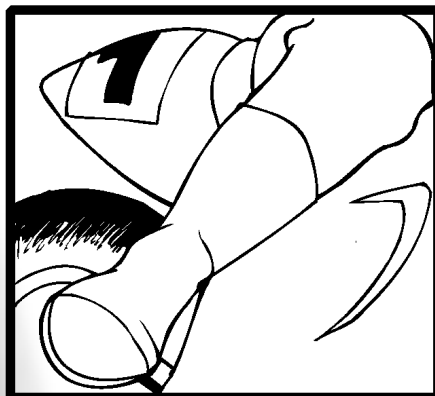
CU Biker puts helmet on

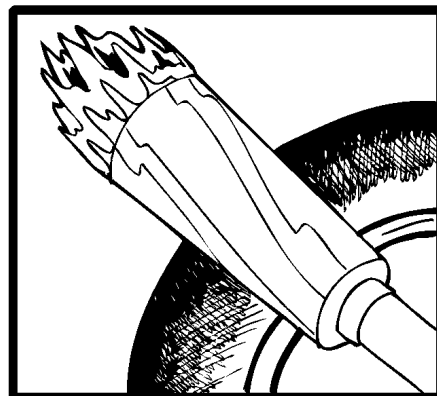LS Biker rides toward camera, race banner in background
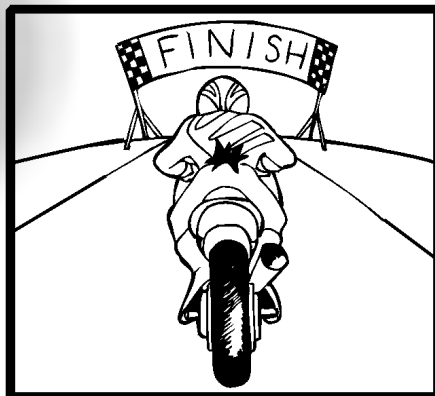

MS profile biker rides to screen right
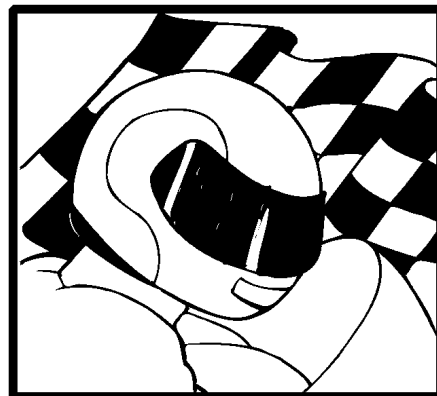

VLS Biker rides to screen right

CU Boot on pedal

CU Exhaust pipe shooting flames

LS Biker rides away from camera

CU Biker in helmet

Illustration based on material from "Producing Videos: A complete guide" by Martha Mollison. Illustrator: Anthea Stead
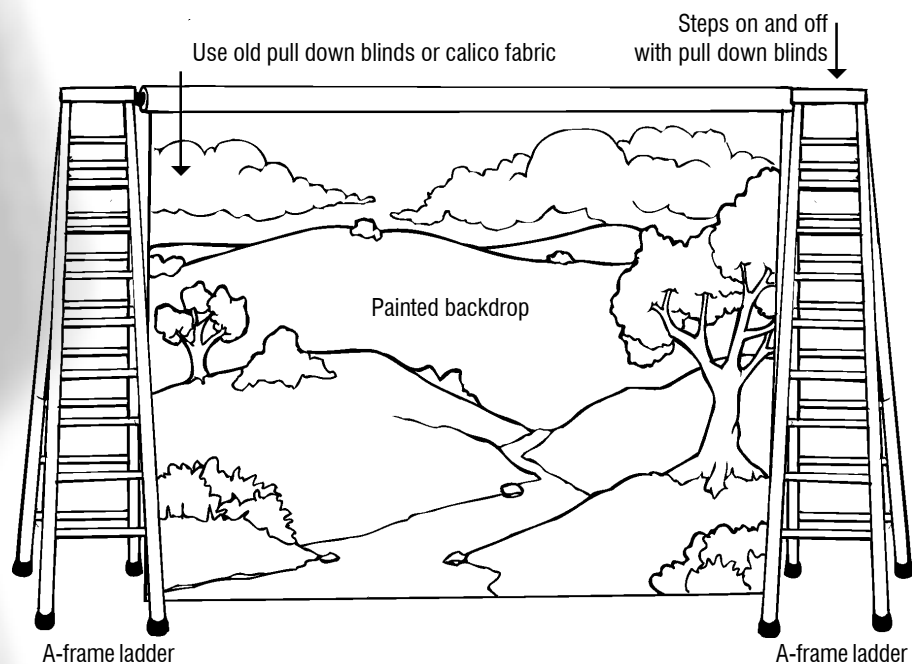
Putting on a Puppet Show

Puppet shows are fun and very simple to organise. A show can be as simple as using Barbie and Ken dolls in appropriate costumes and stuffed toy animals. Make sure the scale of the puppets is realistic. A stuffed dog shouldn't be twice the size of the doll being used.

Cast Choose the cast who will be the "voice actors". As they will be out of view of the audience, they will need to have well-projected voices. Secondly, choose the cast who will manipulate the puppets. You may have the cast both manipulate and speak the character roles. However, to enable good voice projection and not be inhibited by the restrictions of the puppet stage, it is best for voice actors to work separately offstage – in view of the puppets, yet out of view of the audience and possibly with the use of a microphone.

Puppet Stage A very simple puppet stage can be created using two ladders which support the painted backdrop. The painted backdrop can be made using a large piece of calico. Students can then paint the appropriate scenery on the backdrop and glue the top of the backdrop onto a large roller such as is used in pull down blinds. Screw some holes into the ladder and attach the backdrop. The backdrop is then rolled up ready to use. If there are different scenery changes, make a few different backdrops and unroll them between scenes.

An even better alternative (if possible) is to use old vinyl roll down blinds and design the scenery with crayons and paint. Have a hunt around second-hand shops or garage sales for old blinds. Include requests in school newsletters.

Sound and Lighting Keep in mind the same things as you would for a theatre production although, for puppet shows, the lighting is best kept simple. If wanting to depict night time or to create a mood of tension, lights can be dimmed and a torch can be used as a spotlight.

Use old pull down blinds or calico fabric

Steps on and off with pull down blinds

Painted backdrop

A-frame ladder

A-frame ladder

Suggested Shooting Script

For: **Little Red Meets the Dingo**

Please note: The script for the stage play **Little Red Meets the Dingo** (on Page 37) has seven scenes. However, when converting a stage play into a film script, scenes are broken down differently and therefore do not relate in any way to the stageplay's scene numbers. The following suggested shooting sequence shows how the script could be shot using a total of 21 scenes. The director may, however, wish to break the scenes up even more into smaller scenes.

IMPORTANT: For those who have never made a film before, you may want to start out with making a five or ten minute film first. If this is the case then use the **Suggested Shooting Script** sequence below as a guide and take excerpts of the script and condense the story to five or ten minutes. Filming terminology has been used in the notes below. Refer to the filming notes on Page 20. At the end of each scene, a note for editing is included so you know where the scene will fit in your film.

Scene 1

All Typing Scenes

Little Red typing on computer. Film all Little Red's dialogue first with shots of her worried face. Then change the camera angle with shots looking over Little Red's shoulder and film all shots of her typing. You will need to film close-ups of the screen to see what is being typed. Make sure the font size is large enough to see clearly on film.

Instead of Din's voice offstage, film a close-up of a computer screen with Din's hands seen typing his message. The use of a male teacher's hairy arms with fake claws on his fingers could add creepiness to the scene. Din's hands should be the only part of him we see in the first scene. Alternatively, only show Din's reply dialogue on Little Red's computer screen with Din's voice over reading out the dialogue.

Edit Cut to: Scene 2/3

Scene 2

Cindy and Little Red at home

Cindy calls out to Little Red who scrambles to get off the computer. Camera angles and close-ups at the discretion of the director.

Edit Cut to Scene 1 Typing Scene

Scene 3

Cindy getting ready for her audition

CINDY: (From offstage) Goodbye, my dear. Give Granny a kiss for me.

The director can decide how the scene will be shot. It could be in Cindy's bathroom as she washes off her facemask.

Edit Cut to: Cut-in – Little Red rolling her eyes and walking out the door.

Scene 4

Cindy at home answers Granny's call for help

Cindy dressed in glamorous clothes speaks to Granny then calls 000. Only film Cindy's side of the conversation. Film Cindy walking to the door, opening it and calling out.

Edit Cut to Scene 5

Analysing Characters - 1

Use the notes below to help you complete the character profiles on Pages 30-31.

Era born

(*This point can be left out if not applicable.*) Examples are: A hippie born in the '60s. If the character is older, e.g. a grandparent, find out roughly when he/she was born and study that era. Part of a person's personality is reflected by the era he/she was born in and the beliefs and values at that time.

Nationality

What country was the person born in? Does he/she have an accent?

Physical Appearance

Is the person young or old? Tall or short? Strong and muscular? Weak and sickly? Hunched over? Hairy? Toothless?

Characteristic

Introverted ↔ Extroverted

Aggressive ↔ Gentle

Nervous ↔ Laidback

Optimistic ↔ Pessimistic

Generous ↔ Stingy

Kind ↔ Cruel

Popular ↔ Unpopular

Hard worker ↔ Lazy

Leader ↔ Follower

Over reacts ↔ Stays calm

Bossy ↔ Takes orders

Honest ↔ Sly

Mannerisms

Examples include fidgeting, fiddling with hair, nail biting, cracking knuckles, nervous twitches, excessive blinking and so on.

Family Background

Same questions may be asked about parents. Were his/her parents hippies? Workaholics? Strict? Easy going? Well-educated? Wealthy? Poor? Famous? Criminals? Did his/her parents divorce? One or both parents die? Was the character put in foster homes, raised in an orphanage or by close relatives? Does the character have siblings?

Attitudes and Beliefs

What is the character's attitude to life? Does he/she take life seriously or is he/she reckless? What is his/her attitude towards family, money, and social issues? What are the character's personal beliefs? What is the character really passionate about?

Good Points

Does the character have any particular talents or skills? Does he/she take the time to help someone in need? Is he/she reliable?

Bad Points

Is the character selfish or have an ego problem. Does he/she tend to run away from problems or pass the blame?

Little Red Meets the Dingo

An Australian Fairytale

Cast

Little Red .... smart, resilient and tough
Cindy .... Little Red's Mother – high maintenance
Din .... a dingo – deceitful, money hungry
Der .... a dingo – Din's friend, dopey and clumsy
Granny .... Little Red's grandmother – old but tough
Woody .... a woodchopper – handsome and muscular

Setting the Scene

Little Red ignores her mother's warnings about using Internet chat rooms. Little does she know, the deceitful dingo, Din is planning his moves. When her mother drops out of yet another family gathering to put her career first, Little Red reacts by inviting Din to Granny's birthday party with disastrous results. Little Red is taken hostage by Der the dopey dingo, while Din is making Granny sign over her fortune in exchange for Little Red. Does the woodchopper come to the rescue? Does Din get his just desserts? You bet!

Script

Setting: **Downstage section of stage is set with artificial trees to portray the outdoors. Centre and upper stage is set with furniture to portray Little Red/Granny's home. Furniture can be rearranged each time curtain is closed for outdoors scenes.**

Scene One

Curtains open. Little Red is sitting in front of a computer. She is typing in a "chat room" on the Internet. She is chatting with Din the Dingo. Din can be heard speaking offstage.

Din: (*Voice over from offstage*) We've been chatting for a while now, isn't it time we met?

Little Red: Oh, no! How am I going to get out of this one? Mum warned me it would come to this. (*Speaks out loud as she types*) Sorry, not really meant to be using this chat room. Mum would flip out if she knew.

Din: (*Offstage*) So, how will she ever know?

Little Red: (*Types as she speaks*) She has a way of finding things out.

Din: (*Offstage*) I thought you said she was never home?

Little Red: (*Types as she speaks*) She is today, it's my Granny's birthday. We're having a party at her house.

Din: (*Offstage*) Where does your Granny live? Maybe I could meet you after the party.