



**Spare Parts Puppet Theatre**

# **Rules of Summer**

*Adapted from the award-winning book by Shaun Tan*



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## **Primary Teacher Resources**

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*A comprehensive set of classroom activities  
relating to Spare Parts Puppet Theatre's production of Rules  
of Summer*

*Devised by Rebecca Palmer 2017*



## About Rules of Summer

### Shaun Tan

*Rules of Summer* is not only a comprehensive feast of general capability skills, it spans numerous learning areas...personal and social capability are all very present. The fusion of aural and visual media provides experimentation and investigation in music, the drama of the story telling using puppets and people.

## The Creative Team

### Performers

Allan Girod  
Nick Pages Oliver  
Rebecca Bradley

### Puppet Construction

Bryan Woltjen  
Jesse Wood  
Julie Reeves  
Riley Brabin  
Sanjiva Margio

### Production Manager

George Ashforth

### Director

Philip Mitchell

### Assistant Director

Rebecca Bradley

### Adapting writer

Ian Sinclair

### Designer

Leon Hendroff

### Lighting Designer

Graham Walne

### Composer

Lee Buddle

## About the book

Shaun Tan's *Rules of Summer* is a deceptively simple story about two boys, one older and one younger, and the kind of 'rules' that might govern any relationship between close friends or siblings. Rules that are often so strange or arbitrary, they seem impossible to understand from the outside. Yet through each exquisite illustration of this nearly wordless narrative, we can enjoy wandering around an emotional landscape that is oddly familiar to us all.

Tan draws upon his own personal experiences with a surreal snapshot of fishing adventures with his older brother, leaving a sock on the clothes line, and buildings inspired by Brunswick and greater Melbourne. As you venture deep into the story, these poetic images become darker, more mysterious and unsettling, drawing towards a redemptive ending that affirms the depth of true friendship, a bond that is equally wonderful and inexplicable. Moments of humour, surreal fantasy, and the sometimes devastating ways we interact with the people we love the most, are presented in Shaun Tan's typical thought-provoking style. (Hatchett, 2016).

View more at [www.rulesofsummer.com.au](http://www.rulesofsummer.com.au)







## About the performance

A project two years in the making, *Rules of Summer* adapted from the award-winning book by Shaun Tan is an immersive, interactive, and multi-sensory puppetry work. The world premiere follows the journey of two boys who experience the emotional journey of life, the unwritten rules of friendship, and a list of mysterious rules... A performance like no other, see the entire theatre space come to life and experience a sensory world of sight, taste, smell and touch.

## About Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Puppet Theatre

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Puppet Theatre is Australia's flagship puppetry company dedicated to the development and creation of the art form. Through puppetry they share stories that celebrate what it is to be human; connecting audiences across generations. Over the course of its 37-year history Spare Parts Puppet Theatre have entertained and enriched the lives of hundreds of thousands of audiences members both in Australia and abroad.

## Information on theatre etiquette

For some students, seeing *Rules of Summer* may be a first experience of live theatre. The following can be used as a worksheet to promote discussion on what constitutes appropriate audience behaviour at a live performance. Live theatre differs greatly from other medium such as film or television. For audiences, the experience of seeing a live performance differs to that of watching a pre-recorded one. For performers as well, working to a live audience is vastly different to performing in a studio to a camera.

**Certain behaviour is expected of audiences at live theatre events. Please ensure that you observe the following;**

- Arrive on time. Missing the start of a performance will diminish your enjoyment and/or understanding of the piece. It will also disrupt the show for others.
- Turn off any mobile phone, iPod or other electronic device. These are disruptive to the performance and distracting to audience members and performers.
- If necessary, visit the bathroom prior to the commencement of the performance. Going to the bathroom during the performance disrupts the show for yourself as well as others.
- A member of the front of house staff will usher you to your seats. Follow their directions.
- When the lights dim, it is a signal to quiet down.
- During the performance observe the following; no photography, no talking
- Applauding or cheering is the most appropriate way to acclaim the performance and performing artists. Ordinarily this occurs at the conclusion of the performance. All of the above are to ensure that you and other audience members get the most out of the production and your visit to the theatre.



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## Teachers Resources

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### Activities before the performance

- Read the book. Find out about author. Look at Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Puppet theatre website at [www.sppt.asn.au](http://www.sppt.asn.au) and other websites listed at the end of this resource.
- Spare Parts Puppet Theatre performance of *Rules of Summer* is a multimodal/visual text. Focus on expanding your students' vocabulary. Ask students about their understanding of the words 'performance' and
- Questions for discussion:
  1. What are the 5 modes of [multimodal text \(https://creatingmultimodaltxts.com\)](https://creatingmultimodaltxts.com)? (Some excellent resources in this hyperlink.) FYI - Written, Visual, Audio, Gestural and Spatial.
  2. Students can be placed in groups to focus on specific texts in the performance. See the template at the end of these notes.
  3. What is an 'adaptation'?
  4. Why is the *performance* Rules of Summer called "an adaptation"?

### Planning your unit of work

The Australian Curriculum: English aims to ensure that students:

- Learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and **multimodal texts** across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose
- Appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, convey information, form ideas, facilitate interaction with others, entertain, persuade and argue
- Understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with non-linguistic forms of communication to create meaning
- Develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature.

Hatchett books have some very good [teachers notes and guides \(https://www.hachette.com.au/shaun-tan/rules-of-summer\)](https://www.hachette.com.au/shaun-tan/rules-of-summer) relating to **visual texts** which relate specifically to the picture book.

The adaptation of *Rules of Summer* by Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Puppet Theatre is a **multimodal text** and as such, these teacher notes are based on that text type. SCSA has many resources linked to the Australian curriculum for [multimodal texts](#). (teachers must login)

[http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/search3?query=multimodal&search\\_page\\_1269\\_submit\\_button=su\\_bmit+search](http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/search3?query=multimodal&search_page_1269_submit_button=su_bmit+search).

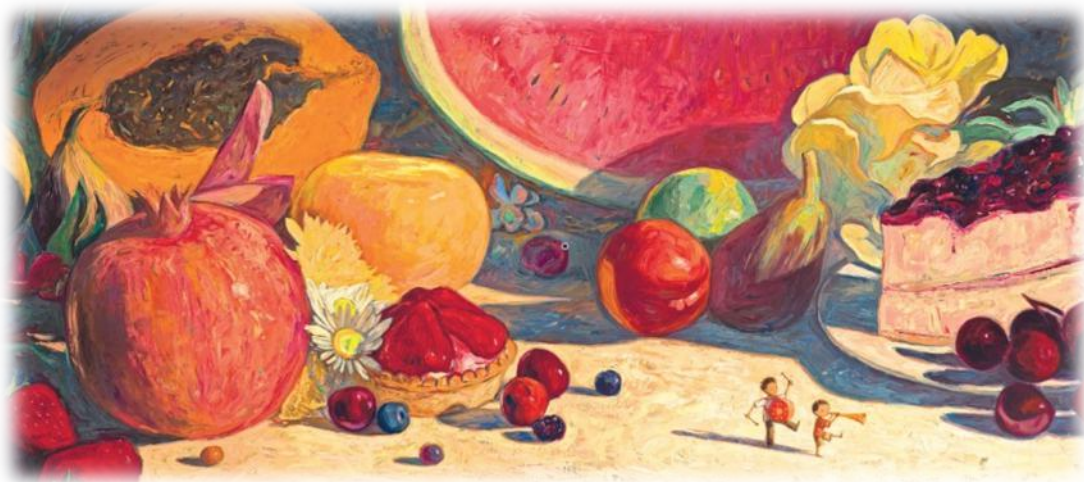
These Teachers Resources use ACARA English and Content Descriptors for Year 4 only. In order to plan for a unit of work using the relevant [ACARA content descriptors and elaborations for multimodal texts for your year](#)





Alternatively, search for 'multimodal text' on the ACARA website and apply the relevant filters for your year level. You may wish to look at [Learning Continuum for Visual Literacy](https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/learning-continuum/?isFirstPageLoad=false&element=Composing+texts+through+speaking%2C+writing+and+creating&element=Visual+Knowledge&level=Level+1b&level=Level+3) <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/learning-continuum/?isFirstPageLoad=false&element=Composing+texts+through+speaking%2C+writing+and+creating&element=Visual+Knowledge&level=Level+1b&level=Level+3> to inform your planning.

The SCSA HASS Scope and sequence can be found [here](#). This production is particularly relevant for rules and laws in Civics and Citizenship from years 4 to 6 and in all years for Geography and History.





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## Language: Knowing about the English Language and how it works

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### Text structure and organisation

- Discuss: Is the performance of *Rules of Summer* a narrative, explanation, procedural or informational text? How do you know? What are the elements and devices that tell you the type of text it is? Understand how texts vary in complexity and technicality depending on the approach to the topic, the purpose and the intended audience ([ACELA1490](#))
- The play does not use dialogue. What do you think the characters and animals would say to each other? Use the Chatterpix app on your iPad to create a dialogue between two characters from the play. Write the sentences in your journals using quotation marks to show the individual speaking parts.
- Create an information text such as a poster based on the creatures in the play. Questions: What are they called? Do they have a scientific name? What is their purpose? What sort of character do you think they are? Where do they live and in what type of climate? Do they have special powers or some evolutionary feature that sets them apart? Can you have one as a pet? Also create a fun fact about your creature.
- At the end of the unit of work, discuss similarities and differences between print and digital texts that the class have created about *Rules of Summer*. Identify features of online texts that enhance readability including text, navigation, links, graphics and layout ([ACELA1793](#))

### Expressing and developing ideas

- When developing a play, Michael Barlow, Associate Director at Spare Parts described how there is some kind of magic in the art form of inanimate objects that can animate our imaginations. “Using puppetry, we get to make a world and a new way of seeing the world moment by moment. This also helps to develop empathy, but can also transcend reality and give permission to the performers to express something that may not be able to be expressed if just acted by real actors.”
- With this in mind, students make faceless puppets out of newspaper to generate some ideas through movement with the object. No dialogue should be used in this activity. Focus on portraying emotions using gesture and movement through space for emotions such as happiness, anger and movements such as running and falling. Extension: students use several props and symbols such as (light bulbs, wings, remote controls) to communicate rather than using words. Have them personally connect with the objects, and explore using improvisation and play to give them personality and meaning. Select a part of the story not included in the play and design set... think about colours and music that you would use.
- Set Design. In *Rules of Summer*, the set is manipulated in various ways. Even the audience becomes part of the production as they are invited to participate. This is called ‘breaking the 4<sup>th</sup> wall.’ Why do you think Spare Parts did this? Research and provide an explanation.
- Some of the sets were moveable and some were fixed. Some dioramas are included. There is also a shadow puppet animation using torches. What do they represent? Why do you think the designers built them that way? Discuss foreground and background, framing, composition, point of view.





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- The scene has special music and sound effects. Discuss how the play works with the music and sound effects. Do they present the same meaning? Describe what you heard and what you think it meant.
- Look at the rule 'Never eat the last olive at a party'. Shaun Tan described this scene as showing the social anxiety of breaking some unwritten rules and how sometimes, we don't really know what is happening but there is a sense of something dangerous going on. Have a class discussion about 'unwritten rules' How do the students respond to them. Are they aware of them and respond by acting impulsively or by overthinking things too much? Discuss how to use mindfulness in unfamiliar and stressful situations using the website Smiling Mind. Explore the effect of choices when framing an image, placement of elements in the image, and salience on composition of still and moving images in a range of types of texts ([ACELA1496](#))






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## Literacy: Expanding the repertoire of English

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### Interacting with others

The performance of *Rules of Summer* is a multimodal text. The following questions are based on information from Syllabus BITES Visual Literacy © State of New South Wales through the Department of Education and Communities.

- Work in a group on butcher's paper to respond the following questions.
- What is the Visual Text? (type, mode, source, main purpose: persuade, inform, entertain, date, author, and context.)
- How is the visual text constructed? (Structure/layout/form.) What conventions are employed? What are the techniques and visual components? Why did Spare Parts Puppet Theatre construct them this way, what choices did they make and why? What is the tone and style? How do the visual elements relate to the target audience? (Structure, form, movement.)
- How effective is the visual text? Does the combination of the modes of text achieve its desired effect on the audience? How did it make you react?
- NB. [MyRead \(http://www.myread.org/guide\\_visual.htm\)](http://www.myread.org/guide_visual.htm) has a visual text analysis guide that may be useful when answering these questions.
- Sounds/music. Share with the class the messages the music conveyed to you in a couple of scenes. Did you feel scared? Happy, Confused? Why? Discuss the quality of the sounds that made you feel that way. Alternatively, perform the same task by downloading the app for ROS on a class iPad. (See link at the end of these resources. (About \$10 for the app)  
Interpret ideas and information in spoken texts and listen for key points in order to carry out tasks and use information to share and extend ideas and information ([ACELY1687](#))
- Prepare a group presentation based on the tasks above.  
Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations incorporating learned content and taking into account the particular purposes and audiences ([ACELY1689](#))

### Interpreting, analysing and evaluating

- Collaborative group work/brainstorming. Use a PMI (Plus/Minus/Interest) chart to examine all sides of an issue of your choice from the play. Highlight the positives/negatives.
- Devise an oral presentation, persuasive debate or an agree/disagree chart on the following topics. (examples – you may devise your own)
  - Some rules are made to be broken.
  - Families. Is it better to have a small family or a large family?
  - Picture books vs live performances. Which has the better narrative style?
  - List reasons for and against both perspectives.
- Are there any visual codes in the play? Any symbols that have meaning? For instance; the crows and the dark presence of the industrial landscape leads to a sense of foreboding. The power towers are like religious icons. The bare flat brick walls and fences represent the blandness of suburbia and the rabbit is not cute and cuddly, but is menacing and fantastical. The fight scene is also performed as tableaux. Why did Spare Parts choose to present in that way? (Hint – the use of tableaux lessens the violent aspect of the fight scene for the audience.  
Identify characteristic features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text ([ACELY1690](#))



- Images can also have inferred meanings as well as writing. For example, the fences and walls in the sets and the paintings often separate the brothers. They may also represent the division between the two brothers. Discuss sibling relationships. Collaboratively work on a class Venn diagram showing older siblings and younger siblings. What is the same? What is different?  
Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts ([ACELY1692](#))

### Creating texts

- Misunderstandings can occur when people such as migrants and refugees are unfamiliar with the rules of the society they join. For example, the First Australians and the colonists of The First Fleet had different sets of rules about land ownership and land care which caused some conflict as well as cooperation in our early history. What was the world like viewed from the eyes of the first Australians? The eyes of the First Fleet? Make a chart of the rules and regulations for each group. Compare. Are there similarities as well as differences? Write an explanation text based on your research. Additionally, you may like to present this as an oral presentation to the class. (Cross curriculum link HASS History)
- Letters can be powerful. Think of a rule that you would like to change or implement at school. Write letters (persuasive texts) to the Principal about your campaign and how it will benefit the school. Publish to your class on Connect or email to admin.
- The stage set often shows a big landscape and built environment and the two boys seem very small and almost overwhelmed in this environment. Was there a time in your childhood when you felt very small and overwhelmed? Use Green Screen app to drop an unusual background behind a photo of yourself. Use gesture and facial expression to show how you feel. Write a narrative based on the image you have created.
- In one of the scenes, the younger boy step on a snail and a giant tornado appears. Were there any funny or weird rules that you created when you were growing up? For example, stepping on cracks in the footpath – what is likely to happen in your imaginary world? Create a class chart of Ridiculous Rules. You may like to publish this in a PowerPoint presentation, alternating images with texts on each slide.
- Create a story map of the play. This time, you need to think of the sounds as well as the visual and written texts. What type of background noises, sounds and music used in each scene? How did it make you feel? Why did the producer use those sounds/music? What did it mean? Was it different from the scene itself? When was the turning point in the story. (See language Never – change to Always. Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts containing key information and supporting details for a widening range of audiences, demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features ([ACELY1694](#)))







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## Literature: Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature

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### Literature and context

- Compare *Rules of Summer* with other stories about:
  - Sibling and family relationships, such as younger siblings wanting to participate and the frustration of being an older sibling and companionship.
  - Built environments taking over natural environments,
  - Rules of different societies and cultures as well as local communities, school, Classrooms' and family.
  - Explore different points of view about the subject and the reasons and justifications.

Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships ([ACELT1602](#))

### Responding to literature

- Write a blurb for the performance of Spare Part Puppet Theatre's performance of *Rules of Summer* to be used in your school newsletter.
- What is the author's purpose?
- Whose point of view does the performance portray? If this book was about you, who do you think you are most like in the story? Why?

Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features of literary texts ([ACELT1604](#))

### Examining literature

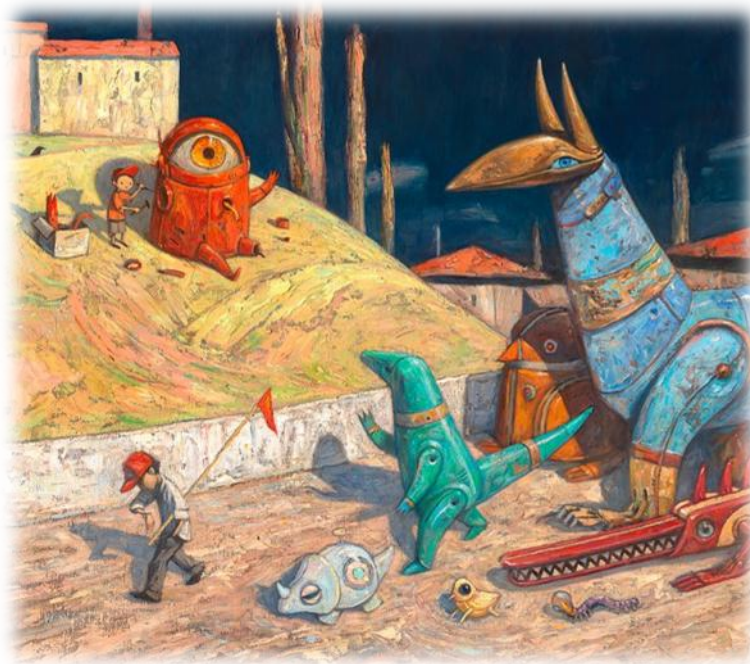
- Use a Y chart graphic organizer to explore one of the scenes in *Rules of Summer* under these headings - 'looks like', 'sounds like' and 'feels like'.
- Plot analysis. Use a digital brainstorming app such as Popplet or a placemat graphic organizer as a collaborative tool for a discussion on the content descriptor below.  
Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example, character development and plot tension ([ACELT1605](#))

### Creating literature

- Respond to the performance on your classroom blog. "If you were the younger boy...If you were the older boy..."
- Write an email or a letter to Spare Parts Puppet Theatre about the part of the performance you liked the most and why.
- Write a story from the point of view of a crow or one of the other creatures. For example, in the scene 'Never ask for a reason.' What do you think happened? What were the creatures thinking? Would they wonder about what humans think about? Use thought bubbles on cartoons or posters to show what the different creatures are thinking.  
Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining ([ACELT1607](#))
- Make a poster showing a combination of a plot timeline and an excitement rating chart.



- Use a comic strip or digital storytelling tool such as iMovie, to recount and sequence the storyline of *Rules of Summer*
- How many different modes of text are there in the performance *Rules of Summer*? What were they? Create a concept map or poster showing the different modes of text used in the performance. (See template for multimodal text)
- If you could have a conversation with one of the characters in the story which character would you choose and what would you talk about?  
Create literary texts by developing storylines, characters, and settings ([ACELT1794](#))







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## References and Additional Resources

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Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Puppet Theatre <http://www.sppt.asn.au/planning-your-excursion/>

Shaun Tan's website: <http://www.shauntan.net/books/Summer.html>

Hatchett Books: [Teachers notes and guides](#). The guides have links to You Tube videos by Shaun Tan:  
<https://www.hachette.com.au/shaun-tan/rules-of-summer>

PETAA [Publications](#):

[http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis\\_prod/w/Teaching\\_Resources/CBCA\\_Guides/2017\\_CBCA\\_Guide/Intro/w/Teaching\\_Resources/CBCA2017/Intro.aspx?hkey=a99a82f2-7bcc-4bc1-8fdc-0e2c7ff2311f](http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis_prod/w/Teaching_Resources/CBCA_Guides/2017_CBCA_Guide/Intro/w/Teaching_Resources/CBCA2017/Intro.aspx?hkey=a99a82f2-7bcc-4bc1-8fdc-0e2c7ff2311f)

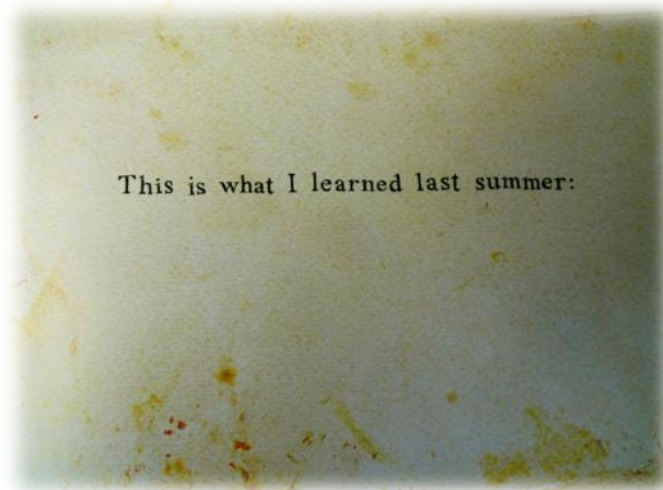
PETAA [Assessment advice](#) for students engaging with visual and multimodal texts:

[http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis\\_prod/w/Publications/PETAA\\_book\\_extras/tsottc.aspx/#Assessment%20advice](http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis_prod/w/Publications/PETAA_book_extras/tsottc.aspx/#Assessment%20advice)

Teaching with Puppets: A video Resource for Teachers Dept. of Education and Early Childhood Development Canada <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/earlychildhood/puppets/>

ICT: *Rules of Summer* app by Wheelbarrow, available from Google Play and Apple Apps.

Additional apps to use: Green screen, Popplet, Timeline, Haiku Deck, Puppet Pals, Chatterpix, Smiling Mind and Headspace. Available from Google Play and the App store.





Today we went to Spare Parts Puppet Theatre puppet show.

We watched the performance of **Rules of Summer** and after class we looked at Multimodal Texts and how they were used in the show to communicate different things.

My groups' mode of text is highlighted below.

<b>Written/ Linguistic mode of text</b>	<b>Visual mode of text</b>	<b>Audio mode of text</b>	<b>Gestural mode of text</b>	<b>Spatial mode of text</b>
<i>Vocabulary, structure and grammar of oral and written language.</i>	<i>Colour and viewpoints in still and moving images</i>	<i>Sound effects, noises, ambient noise and silence through use of volume, pitch and rhythm.</i>	<i>Body movement, hands, eyes and facial expressions and body language and the use of rhythm, speed, stillness and angles.</i>	<i>Position with regards to layout and organisation of objects within a space, proximity and direction. (Think camera angles)</i>

This is my report on how my mode was used in *Rules of Summer*.

Introduction/statement:

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Description: Describe how your mode was used and what it communicated to the audience.

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Conclusion: (What you thought was the best aspect of the performance and why you would recommend others to come and see it.)

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