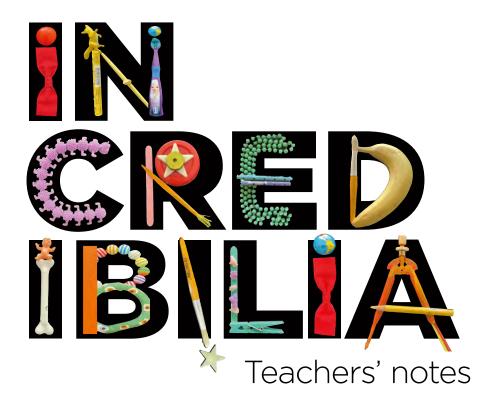


INCREDIBILIA: 20 stories, 101 objects, music and song!



BACKGROUND NOTES

Incredibilia is an imaginative childhood journey, discovering some of the innumerable awe-inspiring wonders of our world. It is a joyous compilation of stories by children's author, Libby Hathorn. *Incredibilia* has been adapted for the stage by Kim Carpenter with original music by Peter Kennard.

Incredibilia draws on words and images from 20 of Libby Hathorn's books, ranging from 1980 to 2023. It is recommended, but not essential, that students be exposed to these texts prior to their visit. While some books are out of print, many of Libby's books will be available through public and school libraries. With the author's permission, excerpts from texts are included in these notes if particularly relevant.

All school bookings receive a copy of The Best Cat, the Est Cat (2021).

Incredibilia is recommended for ages 5 to 10 years.

NSW CURRICULUM OUTCOMES AND TEXT REQUIREMENTS

These teacher notes and attendance at *Incredibilia* provide opportunities for teachers to address the following learning outcomes and text requirements:

ENGLISH

Early	ENE-OLC-01	ENE-RECOM-01	ENE-UARL-01
Stage 1	communicates effectively by using interpersonal conventions and language with familiar peers and adults	comprehends independently read texts using background knowledge, word knowledge and understanding of how sentences connect	understands and responds to literature read to them

Text Requirements: Australian literature, picture books, poetry and texts that feature wordplay and figurative language

Stage 1	EN1-OLC-01	EN1-RECOM-01	EN1-UARL-01
	communicates effectively	comprehends	understands and
	by using interpersonal	independently read texts	responds to literature
	conventions and language	that require sustained	by creating texts using
	to extend and elaborate	reading by activating	similar structures,
	ideas for social and learning	background and word	intentional language
	interactions	knowledge, connecting and understanding sentences and whole text, and monitoring for meaning	choices and features appropriate to audience and purpose

Text Requirements: Australian literature, picture books, poetry and texts that feature wordplay and figurative language

Stage 2	age 2 EN2-OLC-01	EN2-RECOM-01	EN2-UARL-01
	communicates with familiar	reads and comprehends	identifies and describes
	audiences for social and	texts for wide purposes	how ideas are
	learning purposes, by	using knowledge of text	represented in literature
	interacting, understanding	structures and language,	and strategically uses
	and presenting	and by monitoring comprehension	similar representations when creating texts

Text Requirements: Australian literature, narrative, plays, poetry

MUSIC - LISTENING

Early Stage 1	MUES1.4 Listens to and responds to music.
Stage 1	MUS1.4 Responds to a range of music, expressing likes and dislikes and the reasons for these choices.
Stage 2	MUS2.4 Identifies the use of musical concepts and musical symbols in a range of repertoire.

DRAMA - APPRECIATING

Early Stage 1	DRAES1.4 Responds to dramatic performances.
Stage 1	DRAS1.4 Appreciates dramatic work during the making of their own drama and the drama of others.
Stage 2	DRAS2.4 Responds to, and interprets drama experiences and performances.

FROM THE CREATORS

Libby Hathorn

When my friend, theatre director and imagineer, Kim Carpenter, asked me if he could direct a theatre production based on not one but many of my picture books I was delighted and intrigued. Kim came to my place with a suitcase and took every single picture book I had ever written.

Kim selected my story *Over the Moon* (2002) and imagined a magical journey that character and audience could take through several different landscapes and 20 of my books. He imagined new characters, madly original puppets and landscapes; he would find actors and the right musician.

We called this idea *Incredibilia* (the title of one of my books) and it became my job, as writer and librettist, to make it work as a playscript. I also needed to write words for any new songs we might perform. It seemed a huge task at first but once I got started, the words seemed to flow, as I went over the moon from home to other lands, to a desert, to a garden, and safely back home through the texts of my books and new inspiration.

We followed up with more meetings over several months, going over and over words and ideas until the script seemed to shine. This is how the script for *Incredibilia* was born!

Kim Carpenter

For me, my artistic process varies according to the choice of story that is to be brought to life on stage. In the case of *Incredibilia*, I began by reading 40 of Libby's books. I found common themes and the right balance of comedy and drama in 20 of them. With the selected stories, the challenge was to structure and shape a cohesive piece of theatre.

Two invented characters were added to take the audience on a journey through the disparate worlds, moods and locations — hence creating an overarching throughline. In doing this, it was important to edit many of the stories to keep the essential meaning and original intention of the author.

I then worked through the piece, shuffling the stories around as I responded to each through a prolific amount of line drawings, letting my imagination go wild. I selected the most appropriate images and decided how we would realise those images on stage.

For *Incredibilia* I chose object theatre — the most simple and imaginative form of puppetry — taking inanimate objects, subverting them and bringing them to life as characters. The marriage of words and images then came together in the first draft script ready for rehearsal.

The composer began to respond to the script and, in this case, prioritised the music for the songs.

Peter Kennard

My role is twofold: songs and musical underscore. Songs are an emotionally heightened form of text. I seek to extend the rhythm and emotional contour that an actor will bring to the spoken word into the rhythm and melodic rise and fall of the song. In that sense some of these short songs are quite 'conversational'. Tempo and rhythm are stretched to serve expressive needs. Things move quite effortlessly back and forth between speech and song.

As Kim has mentioned above there are disparate worlds, moods and locations. Underscoring music and sound design elements embrace this through the celebration of different genres ... You will hear that I am referencing a wide range of musical influences — from North Indian sounds to dark film-noir city jazz ambience, wide open desert landscapes and the sounds of lonely blues guitar; from South-East Asian influences through to slam poetry rap rhythms and circus mayhem.

Throughout this eclectic romp I also need to be mindful to bring a structure and a cohesion to the whole. I do this by developing a number of key melodic themes that are echoed throughout the piece. You will hear these musical motifs being reprised across the different genres we explore.

The device of two storytellers beginning and ending the stories in the 'neutral' space of a library also gives me a musical anchor point from which to depart and return. Musical underscore is the magic carpet that transports us to our diverse destinations and safely returns us home.

STORIES

The following texts are referenced in Incredibilia:

- 1. *The Great Big Animal Ask* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Anna Pignataro, 2004; Lothian Books, South Melbourne, Vic.
- 2. *Over the Moon*, Libby Hathorn & Caroline Magerl, 2002; Lothian Books, South Melbourne, Vic.
- 3. *Incredibilia* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Gaye Chapman, 2016; Little Hare Books, an imprint of Hardie Grant Egmont, Richmond, Vic.
- 4. Sangita's Singing by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Bandana Tulachan, 2012; Pax Press, NSW.
- 5. *Mother Earth: Poems to celebrate the wonder of nature* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Christina Booth, 2023; Lothian Children's Books, Gadigal Country; Sydney, NSW.
- 6. *The Wonder Thing* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Peter Gouldthorpe, 1998; Puffin, Ringwood, Vic.
- 7. *A Face in the Water* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Uma Krishnaswamy, 2000; Tulika Books, Chennai; distributed by Goodbooks Marketing.
- 8. *Butterfly, We're Expecting You!* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Lisa Stewart, 2017; Hachette Australia, Sydney, NSW.
- 9. *Outside* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Ritva Voutila, 2014; Hardie Grant, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW.
- 10. *The Surprise Box* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Priscilla Cutter, 1994; Nelson Australia, South Melbourne.
- 11. *The Wishing Cupboard* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Elizabeth Stanley, 2002; Lothian Books, South Melbourne, Vic.
- 12. *Grandma's Shoes* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Elivia, 1994; Viking, Ringwood, Vic.
- 13. *The Extraordinary Magics of Emma McDade* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Maya, 1995 (first printed 1989); Sparklers, Rydalmere, NSW.
- 14. *The Lenski Kids and Dracula* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Peter Viska, 2001; Puffin, Ringwood, Vic.
- 15. *What a star!* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Kerry Millard. Pymble, NSW; Angus & Robertson, 1994.
- 16. *No! Never!: A cautionary tale* by Libby Hathorn and Lisa Hathorn-Jarman, illustrated by Mel Pearce, 2020; Lothian Children's Books, an imprint of Hachette Australia, Sydney, NSW.
- 17. *Lachlan's Walk* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Sandra Laroche, 1980; Methuen of Australia, Sydney.
- Way Home by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Gregory Rogers, 1995; Random House Australia, Sydney.
- 19. *The Best Cat, the Est Cat* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Rosie Handley, 2021; State Library of NSW, Sydney, NSW.
- 20. *A Boy Like Me: A story about peace* by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Bruce Whatley, 2012; Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney South, NSW.



PRE-VISIT THINKING AND LEARNING

These are suggested activities to explore before viewing the performance of *Incredibilia*. Choose the ones that are most appropriate for your class. They are not sequential.

• Libraries

Incredibilia opens in a library. Do you have a favourite library? What makes it a special place? What activities do you enjoy at the library?

Discuss your ideas with other students and make a class list called *Things that make a library* a great place to be.

Nursery Rhymes

The dish and the spoon from 'Hey Diddle Diddle!' appear as puppets in *Incredibilia*.

Read the nursery rhyme:

Hey Diddle Diddle! the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon; the little dog laughed to see such fun, And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Locate a recording of 'Hey Diddle Diddle!'

Sing it as a song.

Perform it as a poem.

'Hey Diddle Diddle!' is a nonsense rhyme that is meant to be silly.

Think about the sentence 'And the dish ran away with the spoon'. How are dishes and spoons connected in real life?

- **Replace** the words dish and spoon with other everyday objects that share a connection e.g. comb and shampoo.
- Change the verb from 'ran' to something creative and funny e.g. 'swam'.
- Write or say your new line.
- **Illustrate** your new silly sentence.
- Share it with a friend.

Going deeper:

Find a collection of nursery rhymes in the school library. **Read** some more simple nursery rhymes or fairy tales together. **Discuss** how you could you change a story into a play? What steps would you take? **Brainstorm** all the elements that would need to be changed or created. Setting? Characters? Narrator? Script? Props? Puppets? Costumes? **Work** on a timeline. What needs to be done first?

Students work in small groups to plan, adapt, write and rehearse their own script based on a familiar text.

Idiom — what is it?

An idiom is an expression that holds a different meaning to its literal one.

Libby Hathorn's book Over the Moon (2002) is part of the inspiration for the play.

Investigate the meaning of being 'over the moon'.

For teachers: 'over the moon' means **to be very pleased**. Usage: She was over the moon about her new bike. Source: (*BE OVER THE MOON | English meaning — Cambridge Dictionary*, n.d.)

Name some words that you associate with the feeling of being 'over the moon'

Libby's book, Grandma's Shoes (1994), has the following lines:

'When Grandma died, lots of people came to our house. "Who could ever step into such a woman's shoes?" the family asked.'

Discover the meaning of the idiom, 'to step into someone's shoes'.

For teachers: to step into someone's shoes means to take someone's place, often by doing the job they have just left. Usage: Who do you think will step into Sarah's shoes when she goes? Source: (*STEP INTO SOMEONE'S SHOES – Cambridge English Dictionary*, n.d.)

Going further:

Idiom is an example of figurative language.

Explore examples of idiom in common use in English.

There are lists available online, specifically for children and <u>Wonderopolis</u> offers some further ideas.

Drama and Movement

Inside vs Outside

Think about activities that you like to do. What activities are better when done outside? What are the benefits of being outside?

Brainstorm a list then play a game of charades based on things that you can do outside.

Listen to these words below and move your body in response.

'For tomorrow will shine with more things to find under fluttery leaves in the magical breeze in the summery sun — to dance and to twirl in the beautiful world, bright and beautiful world just outside!'

From Outside (2014) by Libby Hathorn

Poetry

Using the five senses **write** a poem about being outside. Use '*Butterfly, we're expecting you!*' (2017) as inspiration.

'An afternoon outside our house, Let's see what we can find, The sun so bright, the breeze so cool,

Our garden, yours and mine!'

Describe something you can see, hear, smell, taste and touch outside. **Write** a poem using this simple format.

			Example:
	to smell,		Blossoms to smell,
	to see,		Bright sun to see,
	to taste,		Dewdrops to taste,
	to hear,		Buzzing to hear,
	to touch		Muddy puddles to touch
Outside feels		!	Outside feels great!

Play around with words, rhythm and the order of the senses until you have your own unique poem.

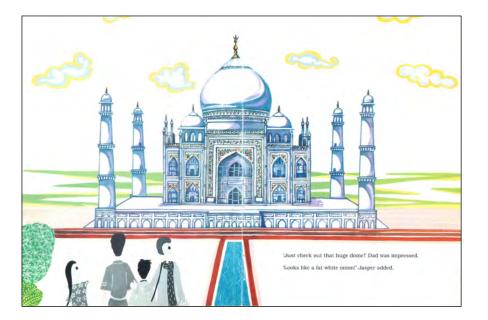
Background research

Locate Nepal on a world map. What is the capital city? Which countries share borders with Nepal?

Find the world famous geographical feature in Nepal.

Research and record interesting facts.

These free <u>teacher notes</u> for Libby's book, *Sangita's Singing* (2012), are recommended for further learning about Nepal.



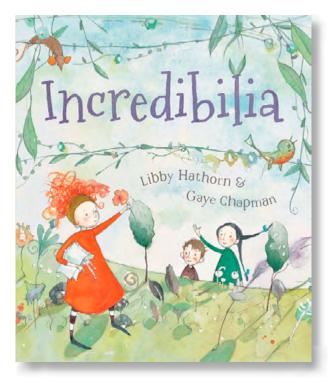
The Taj Mahal

Locate some information online or in your school library about this famous Indian icon. **Look** carefully at a photograph of the Taj Mahal.

In Libby's book *A Face in the Water* (2000) the Taj Mahal is described as 'a princess surrounded by four ladies in waiting' and as 'a fat white onion'!

Use your imagination to **describe** or **draw** your own Taj Mahal.

Imagination



Read *Incredibilia* (2016) by Libby Hathorn and Gaye Chapman. This book celebrates little Georgie's imagination. She encourages her siblings to join her in the wildly imaginative game she calls 'Incredibilia'. Gaye Chapman's whimsical illustrations capture little Georgie's thoughts and imaginings.

Look closely at the illustrations in the book (including the endpapers).

Talk about what you can see. How would you describe the lines that are used to draw what is in Georgie's imagination? Are they wispy? Or wiggly? Or curly? Can you see any straight lines? Why not?

Notice how Georgie's hair changes through the story. Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to add objects to Georgie's hair?

What do you think Georgie's game called 'Incredibilia' will be like?

Talk about this with a friend. **Invent** your own Incredibilia game.

Using materials of your choice **draw** something from your own imagination.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR VISIT

Make sure you take the time to spot the statue of Matthew Flinders' cat Trim. It is outside the library on Macquarie Street near the statue of Flinders. Trim is the star of Libby's book, *The Best Cat, the Est Cat* (2021). For more background to the story of Flinders and Trim these teacher notes are recommended.



POST-VISIT TASKS

These are suggested activities to explore after viewing *Incredibilia*. Choose those appropriate for your class.

• The State Library of NSW

Read your copy of *The Best Cat, the Est Cat* (2021). This is a guided tour of the State Library. If you joined in a tour of the library during your visit to *Incredibilia* look closely to see how many places and items you recognise. These <u>teacher notes</u> are recommended to further explore *The Best Cat, the Est Cat.*

• The wonders of the world

In the play you heard about the Taj Mahal as a wonder of the world.

Research the wonders of the world. There are different categories such as ancient, modern, natural etc.

Discuss what makes a place wonderful?

Collaboratively **create** a list of **'The seven wonders of your school'**. They might be places, people or activities. What are the places that you value or enjoy? If you have a favourite place, person or activity at school be ready to support your thinking with a reason.

Take photographs of your class wonders and make a presentation to share.

Challenge another class to name their own seven wonders. Are they similar or different to yours? Why do you think this is so?

Share your findings with your principal!

Water

In *Incredibilia* the actors travel over the moon on a wild adventure. In the desert it is too hot so they climb a rocky mountain to have a view of the whole world.

From the mountain top they ask 'But where's the water that we need?'

Libby's book *The Wonder Thing* (1995) celebrates life-giving water. The text of this book is also included in her poetry book *Mother Earth* (2023).

Libby uses **similes** to describe water.

'Good as gold, Precious as air, Powerful as rock, Gentle as kisses, Lovely as life is For the life it will bring, Splendid as rainbows, A miracle thing, Retaw!'

A simile is a way of describing something by comparing it to something else using 'like' or 'as', usually in an interesting or imaginative way. Writers often use similes to make their writing richer and give the reader a good picture of what is being described.

Think about water and why it is important.

Brainstorm some adjectives to describe water. Here are a few ideas. Fresh, cool, soft, rare.

Next **think** of a noun that matches your adjective. Eg Fresh like snow. Cool as summer rain. Soft as velvet. Rare as diamonds.

Write and illustrate your own simile for water.

Going deeper

Why does Libby Hathorn use the word Retaw! What does it mean? Hint: it is water spelled backwards.

Experiment with spelling your name backwards. Can you read it? What about other words?

Here are a few to ponder. Sdrow. Elzzup. Meop. Retirw. Erutan. Nuf saw Ailibidercni!

Create some of your own words or sentences and **challenge** your friends and family to solve them.

To further investigate the wonder and importance of water on our planet the NSW Government has a range of resources designed to encourage students to investigate what makes water such a precious resource.

• Food

In Incredibilia you heard the following words

'And there's so much to EAT! So much to eat! Bread sticks, falafel, sushi and rice A pizza yummy, and a pasta so nice Long strands of spaghetti You can't get too many Loooong strands of spaghetti, yes!'

Many families have favourite foods. Lots of foods that we eat in Australia originally came from other countries and cultures.

Investigate the origins of falafel, burritos, sushi, pizza, pasta and crepes.

Gather a list of favourite foods in the class. What country do these foods come from?

Find the flags of these countries.

Ideally you will be able to share food in the classroom but if not, you could use a paper plate to **design and make** a collage that includes the food and the flag from one country.

Display them in your classroom.

Shoes

In the play you saw a pair of pink high-heel shoes belonging to Grandma. They come from the book *Grandma's Shoes* (1994). They were magical shoes.

Do you have a favourite pair of shoes?

Describe your shoes. If your shoes were magical where would they take you? **Draw** yourself in your magical shoes.

<u>New Shoes</u> is a learning activity from the State Library specifically designed for Year 1 and 2 students.

Peace

A Boy Like Me (2012) is a story about peace. In this book peace is depicted as a bird. Children are looking for peace but cannot find it. The child in the story wonders if he can help others find peace.

'And yet, a boy like me?'

He notices peace around him. In the play you heard ...

'Peace was braided In their voices and our laughter, A bright ribbon round our house. Then silence fell Hugged me Wrapped me up Safe and warm.'

Create a drawing of something or someone that makes you feel peaceful. **Add** a bright ribbon to your drawing.

Plait a peace braid using ribbons, wool or threads of different colours.

The child in the story values peace:

'Peace is in the talking and in the ending of the fight ... Peace can be found and touched and heard. I know I'll always find you, brave and welcome bird ... a boy like me, a girl like me.'

In what ways do you think a child can help to bring peace, love or friendship to others?

Think of ways that you could show friendship to your classmates or help to bring peace to your school.

Plan and rehearse a quick playground scene that demonstrates peace, kindness or friendship.

Perform the scene for your class.

Create some sock puppets for the classroom that can be 'peace puppets'. These can be used to reinforce positive behaviours and kind words.

Abstract vs concrete

Peace is an example of an abstract noun. Abstract nouns are things we cannot see or touch. Abstract nouns are often feelings or emotions. They might have positive associations like love, friendship and enthusiasm, or negative like fear or hunger.

Concrete nouns are physical things that can be seen, touched, heard etc.



Identify the objects that you can see in this image which was created to advertise *Incredibilia*. **Draw** your own name and **add** your favourite objects inside the letters.

Brainstorm a list of concrete nouns that you saw in the play *Incredibilia*. There were 101 objects. How many can you remember?

Abstract nouns are harder to spot. The ideas of home, treasures, wishes, joy, hope, friendship and peace recur throughout the play.

Discuss the plot and action of the play. Older students may be able to create a story map.

Going deeper

List times when abstract ideas were evident.

Hopes and wishes

If possible, locate the book *The Wishing Cupboard* (2002). The abstract ideas of home and hope appear in this book.

'In the corner of the room was a cupboard. Behind the two big doors were more doors. Tiny inlaid ones that opened outward. Pale, shiny ones that could roll up like louvres. Burnished gold ones that moved sideways on metal grooves. There were drawers too, of all shapes and sizes. And little alcoves, spaces with no doors, That were dark and inviting'

In the story, special objects are kept in the wishing cupboard to remind the family of people and events in the past. Some objects represent hopes and wishes for the future. Then the grandmother says to the boy,

'This part is for you. You can put something of your own inside and make your own special wish ... Tran took out all his toys, but he was thinking about what to put in the wishing cupboard. There was something he wanted very, very badly. But perhaps he should make a wish for his grandmother too. Tran smiled to himself. He remembered something his mother had sent last week, all the way from Vietnam!

He took the postcard from beside the family shrine and tiptoed to the cupboard. He put it in his own special place, with a lotus flower on top. Tran closed his eyes tight then. And he made not one wish, but two.'

What do you hope or wish or hope for?

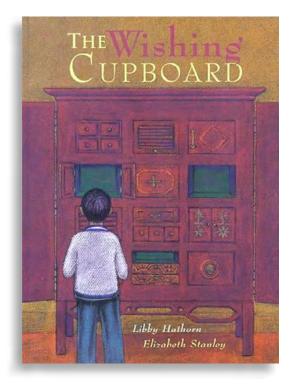
Hint: Hopes and wishes are not something that you could buy in a shop.

What object would you choose to represent your wish? (Tran chose the postcard to represent his mother coming home).

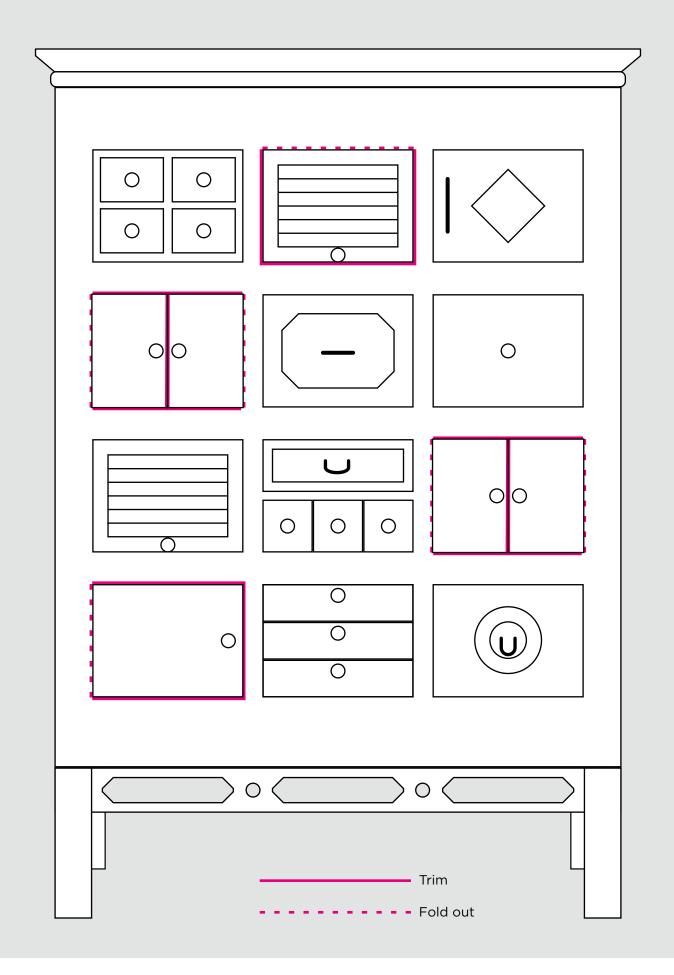
Using the template provided on the next page, **make** your own wishing cupboard and **draw** some objects that are important to you.

You could also create your wishing boxes from empty matchboxes or a make a small box from card and add a paper wish.

If you'd like to, **talk** about your wishing cupboard with a friend.



THE WISHING CUPBOARD



• Home

The abstract idea of home is repeated in the play. Libby's award winning book *The Way Home* (1994) tells of a homeless boy who befriends a stray cat and together they face fears and threats before finally finding their way home.

In the play, the mother's voice reminds repeatedly:

'Don't be too long' 'Remember you need to be home before sunrise ...' 'Make sure you're both home before dark'

Home can mean different things to different people. Where are the places that you feel at home? What is special about them?

Draw your home/s and the people you find there.

The characters in the play find their way home after an incredible journey around the world.

What was your favourite part of the play? At your home, **talk** about the experience of going to the State Library. **Tell** someone about your day, the play that you saw, and some other things that you enjoyed.

Additional Resources

'Creating a theatre piece from fairy tales', <u>Your Handy Companion to Devising and Physical</u> <u>Theatre</u>, 2013

'68 examples of idioms for kids', YOURDICTIONARY, (n.d.)

'Water', School water education resources, NSW Government, 2023

The Best Cat, the Est Cat: Teachers notes, State Library of NSW

Inspired by the work of celebrated children's author Libby Hathorn, the State Library presents a new show — *Incredibilia* — adapted by acclaimed theatre-maker, Kim Carpenter (of Theatre of Image) with music by Peter Kennard's extraordinary one-man band.

Audiences will be captivated when 101 extraordinary objects are brought to life by multi-talented performers in an immersive experience that uses music, song and puppetry.

Incredibilia tells the story of two intrepid best friends as they embark on an imaginative journey, crossing super-hot deserts, spooky cities, exotic gardens and taking a trip over the moon, to discover the true meaning of connection.

This heartwarming performance is a celebration of family, friendship, the warmth and comfort of home.

Join us and let your imagination run wild!

Suitable for ages 5 to 10 years.

SYLLABUS OUTCOMES

The performance supports learning and general capabilities across:

- Drama
- English
- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking

PERFORMANCE TIMES & BOOKING INFORMATION

From 11 to 26 May 2024 Weekday shows 10.30 am and 12.30 pm

Weekend shows 11 am and 1 pm

School groups can also book a FREE tour of the State Library after the show.

Every school will receive a free copy of Libby Hathorn's picture book about the Library, *The Best Cat, the Est Cat*.

Schools may also be eligible for our bus subsidy program.

Teachers notes with pre- and post-show activities will be available in Term 1 2024

Tickets

\$27 students and teachers

MORE INFORMATION

Online: sl.nsw.gov.au/incredibilia

Email: <u>learning.library@sl.nsw.</u> gov.au

Phone: (02) 9273 1778

In person: Ask at the Information Desk.

When booking, please mention any concessions or special requirements for people with disability.

This production is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW, assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body, and the State Library of NSW







