



Westpac Duffy Theatre 2023 – Teachers’ Notes

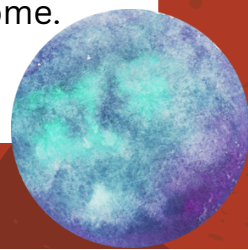


Kia ora koutou ngā kaiako,

We’re bringing our 2023 Duffy Theatre show, Duffy Needs His Space to your school to promote the Books In Homes message: “It’s cool to read and it’s cool to achieve”.

Last year we spent a day in one of our Duffy schools workshopping ideas for this year’s play. We sensed that the kids were tired that day. Their thoughts were elsewhere, and their attention was scattered. To be honest, we all empathised! Two years of coping with the COVID-19 pandemic has left many of us feeling the same way. Conversations with the kaiako that day confirmed that many of Aotearoa’s kids and their wonderful teachers are feeling a little burnt out. Every year, space, planets, and stars capture Duffy kids’ imaginations, and last year was no exception. In fact, it seemed that the kids were more interested than ever in turning their minds towards the infinite possibilities the universe holds. So, we thought we’d make this year’s play an escape – an adventure that shoots us far, far away from daily life and its challenges, while exploring the notion that reading can truly expand our horizons.

This year, Duffy needs his space. He finds plenty of it, when his allergy-prone little cousin, Stuffy, sneezes so hard a rift in time and space opens creating a wormhole! Equipped with a pile of school library books on te tātai tuarangi (the cosmos), Duffy heads bravely through the wormhole into a parallel universe. With the help of alien buddies Duffzip and Stuffzip, and using the knowledge he gleans from his books, Duffy leaps in and out of new worlds, until he finds his way home. Duffy realises that life on Earth may be messy, stressful, and tricky sometimes, but... kia mau ki te tokanga nui a noho. There’s no place like home.





The Team

Our seasoned and skilful Duffy director, Jeff Szusterman, has spent the 2022/23 summer working with two talented casts to bring Duffy Needs His Space to life for you. Our play delivers its message with quirky imagination, physical comedy, and lots of playfulness around language and communication. Aotearoa theatre legends John Parker (set designer) and Elizabeth Whiting (costume designer) transport us to outer space and bring aliens into your schools with their ingenious designs, while master of adaptability, Production Manager David Rumney, works through all challenges to keep this show on the road. A former Duffy actor himself, David understands how powerful theatre can be, when it comes to sparking kids' passion for learning.

We love receiving your feedback. Please share what you and your students think about Duffy's latest adventures by emailing David:
david.rumney@booksinhomes.org.nz

Ngā mihi mahana,
Lauren Jackson, Playwright

You can meet our 2023 cast on our website:
<https://www.booksinhomes.org.nz/what-we-do/our-work/duffy-theatre.aspx>



Jeff Szusterman



Lauren Jackson



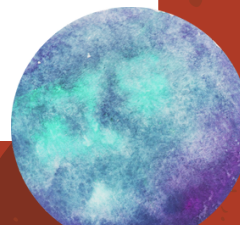
John Parker



Elizabeth Whiting



David Rumney





Teachers' Notes

During the show, the performers will interact with the children to encourage them to engage with our message: "It's cool to read. It's cool to succeed." It's fine (in fact it helps the actors) if students express themselves during the performance. Our actors are equipped to cope with well-intentioned interjections and welcome this interplay!

These Teachers' Notes offer some suggestions about how you might prepare your tamariki to participate in this year's show. They offer ideas for discussions and activities you might engage in before or after the show.

Pre- or Post-Show Activities

1. Create Your Own Alien

Either drawing or using items from the class "useful box" (egg cartons, pipe cleaners, boxes, fabric, plastic bottles etc.), encourage your students to create or construct their very own alien, based on themselves! Duffy meets Duffzip, who also loves to read and look after his family. Ask the tamariki: How would your alien twin look? In which ways would they look and act like you? How might they be different?

This could be extended to a writing exercise exploring their alien friend's planet and the challenges its inhabitants might face.





2. Meet the nine stars of Matariki

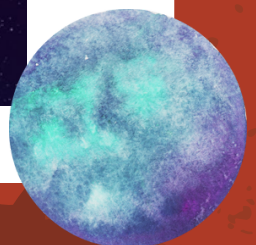
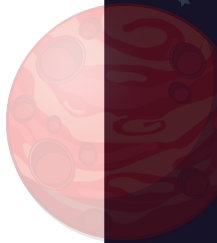
Sometimes, there is uncertainty around whether seven or nine stars make up the Matariki star cluster. According to this resource from Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, the answer is... both. Have a read, then go on to this fun activity with your class:

Watch this slideshow from Te Papa, introducing the nine stars of Matariki, then put your students into groups of nine. Invite them to position themselves into a “star cluster”, then introduce themselves to the class. Each child plays one of the stars, giving their name and sharing some information about themselves. For example, “Kia ora, ko Waitā ahau. I’m the star of the ocean and kai moana. If I look blurry when I rise at Matariki, you won’t catch much kaimoana this year, but if I’m shining bright, you’ll find lots to eat in the sea.”

This website also offers downloadable Matariki activity books in Te Reo and English.

Links:

- <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/maori/matariki-maori-new-year/matariki-star-cluster-are-there>
- <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/matariki-maori-new-year/meet-nine-stars-matariki>
- <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/learn/for-educators/free-downloadable-activity-books/matariki-activity-book>





3. Make a Solar System Mobile for your Classroom

This is a great group activity for your kids that relies on their own creativity – no templates involved! Be like Stuffy, and make your own solar system mobile...

Using very simple materials, your students will draw, cut, and bind the planets together (with some teacher support to work out dimensions and distances). Mary McIntyre, (astronomer and teacher of astrophotography) takes you through this activity step-by-step, teaching you about each planet along the way.

You will need:

- Cotton, wool, or string
- 2 x wooden dowel, 60cm in length
- 2 x cardboard discs for each planet
- 1 x cardboard disc for Saturn's rings
- 1 x ring for hanging the mobile (a keyring works well)
- Colouring pencils or pens

Link:

<https://www.skyatnightmagazine.com/advice/diy/make-a-solar-system-mobile-for-kids/>





4. Make a Solar System Bracelet

Something for the older kids (Year 5+). Use beads to create a solar system you can wear on your wrist. The distances are not accurate (it would be a very big bracelet), so this resource gives you some ideas on how to convey the true distances while completing this very fun activity.

Link:

<http://formontana.net/bracelet2.html>

5. Take a Deep Dive into Space

Perhaps light years, star nurseries, and the James Webb Space Telescope have captured your students' imaginations! If you'd like to take a deeper dive into all things galactic, here are some great online videos and resources:

What is the James Webb Space Telescope?

NASA breaks it down for kids on this page of infographics.

<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/james-webb-space-telescope/en/>

The James Webb Space Telescope is an international collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

But how did they build it? How does it work? And how did they launch it into space?

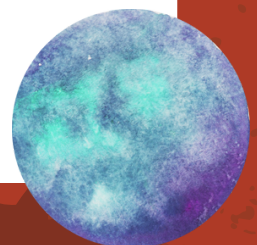
This four-minute video, An Introduction to the James Webb Space Telescope Mission, answers your questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VqG3Jazrfs>

What on earth are light years?

This is a tough one to explain, but Sarah does a great job in this Learning With Sarah video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1sxsMr-AMo>





Discussion Points

1) *Duffy says everyone at school is a bit kiriweti (grumpy). To cope with stressful times, Duffy likes to have some space and quiet time. He reads and looks through his telescope.*

- What helps you feel better when life gets a bit stressful? Why does this help?

“Space is all around us, expanding in every direction. Often, we only focus on what is in front of us, and sometimes forget about the space behind us, above us, below us, and on each side of us. Ngā Aronga e Ono is a mindful movement that helps us to connect with space in all directions: to the right, left, forwards, backwards, upwards, and downwards.” (pausebreathesmile.nz) Try it here, along with other mindful movements, at Pause Breathe Smile:
<https://pausebreathesmile.nz/free-resources/>

2) *Duffy can talk to Duffzip thanks to a translation crystal.*

- Would you like to have a translation crystal? Why/why not?
- How would the world be different if everyone had a translation crystal in their pocket?
- Are different languages important? Why/why not?

3) *Duffy accesses new galaxies by jumping through a wormhole.*

- If you had your very own wormhole, where do you wish it could take you, and why?
- How would that change your life and the life of your whānau?

4) *At the end of the play, Duffy is relieved to be back at home, even if life isn't perfect.*

- What does it mean when people say, “There’s no place like home” or “Kia mau ki te tokanga nui a noho”?
- Do you agree? Why/why not?

