



Antarctica!

Creative Learning
Teacher Resource



ANTARTICA!

Learning resource syllabus notes for ES1–2

- **Subjects:** Creative Arts (Drama, Dance, Music) PDHPE, and Geography
 - **General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking and Personal and Social Capability
 - **Age Group:** aimed at Primary School students with adaptations that make it especially inclusive for high school students with moderate intellectual disability
 - **Genre:** The performance is an immersive, non-verbal sensory theatre experience combining physical theatre, live music, and audience interaction
 - **Themes:** resilience, teamwork, survival, environmental awareness, exploration, and empathy
- *Antarctica!* explores themes of resilience, teamwork, and adventure. Through movement, sound, and sensory experiences, students are invited to feel what it's like to face challenges, rely on others, and keep going even when things are tough.
 - The performance also touches on the natural beauty and harsh conditions of Antarctica, encouraging curiosity about the environment and empathy for those who journey through it.
 - It's a story of connection—between people, place, and the courage it takes to find your way through the unknown.

With thanks to Rosan Sensory Adventures and Christine Huynh for developing this creative learning resource.

Performance Overview

Step into a sensory world of snow, ice, and sound, as students become part of Shackleton's legendary expedition across Antarctica. Surrounded by sculptural icebergs, swirling fabric seas, and real ice, students are gently guided through an extraordinary story of survival and teamwork.

There is no script to follow—just movement, music, and the powerful feeling of being part of something much bigger. With few words but rich sensory storytelling, students will be invited to listen, move, touch, feel, and imagine. For students in Special Schools, the show offers opportunities to become crew members, take part in the journey, and shape the adventure as it unfolds.



Performance Overview

Created by Irish sensory artist Phillida Eves and performer Amélie Bal, Antarctica! is designed especially for children with additional needs and adapted for inclusive family and school audiences.

Expect soundscapes and live music, textured sets, cardboard forts, flurries of fabric, and moments of deep connection—between the performers, the story, and your students.

This is a story of endurance, friendship, and finding your way home through ice and uncertainty—told not through words, but through sensory wonder.



What to expect in the performance

Antarctica! is a non-verbal, immersive theatre experience that blends sensory storytelling, movement, and live music in a calm and welcoming environment.

Lighting

- The space is softly lit with cool tones to evoke an Antarctic landscape
- At times the lighting will dim to represent snowstorms or night-time
- Iceberg props may glow softly; there are no flashing or strobe lights

Seating

- Movement during the show is welcome; students may stand, lie down, or change positions as needed

Music and Sound

- The performance uses live music and layered soundscapes
- Sounds include wind, ice cracking, water, and gentle percussion
- Volume may rise slightly in stormy moments but remains within an appropriate sensory range



What to expect in the performance

Performance

- Performers use physical theatre, objects, and music to tell the story without words
- Performers may move near or interact gently with students, but participation is optional
- Students may be invited to become “crew members” and join the story

Interaction and Sensory Elements

- The set includes textured props: cardboard crates, fabrics, glowing icebergs, and real ice
- Students may be invited to touch or explore these elements during or after the show

Post-Show Experience

- A 15-minute calm, sensory exploration of the set will follow the show
- Students can revisit props, meet the performers, and explore at their own pace

Personal Safety and Wellbeing

- Students are welcome to leave at any time during the performance if they need a break
- Teachers are encouraged to check in with students in the hours or days after the show, especially those sensitive to sensory or emotional experiences



Rosán Sensory Adventures

Rosán (Rus-awn): a favourable wind and gentle sea

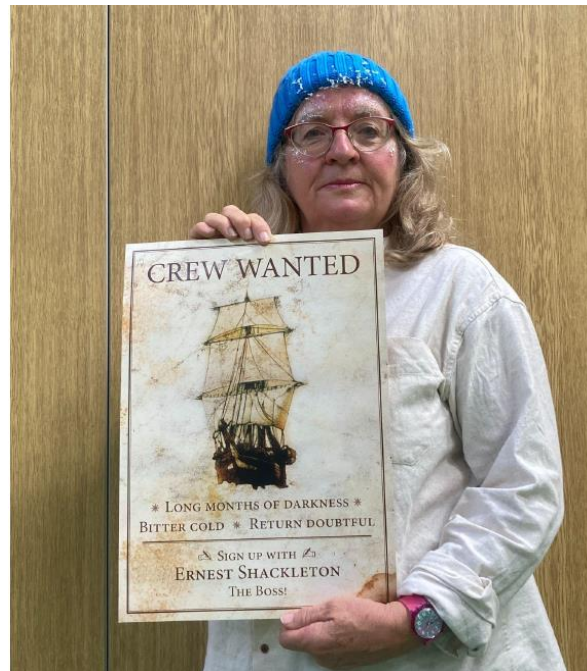
Rosán Sensory Adventures, led by Phillida Eves, makes work with multidisciplinary artists, creating and presenting accessible, immersive, musical, movement and theatrical experiences with and for Autistic children and young people with intellectual learning disabilities.

Phillida Eves, the Artistic Director of Rosán Sensory Adventures, is a creative sensory artist and educator who is passionate about giving the audience a voice in the creative process and agency in expressing themselves through the creative arts.

Phillida, and the artists she works with, develop the work with the children and young people, who are at the heart of the collaborative process.

Website: www.rosan.ie

Instagram: @rosan_sensory_adventures



Glossary

An introduction to Antarctica

- **Antarctica:** The coldest place on Earth. It's covered in ice and snow and is home to animals like penguins and seals.
- **Expedition:** A journey or trip made to explore a new or dangerous place. Shackleton's expedition went to Antarctica.
- **Explorer:** A person who travels to new or unknown places to discover and learn more about them.
- **Resilience:** Not giving up, even when things are hard. It means being strong inside.
- **Teamwork:** Working together and helping each other to reach a goal.
- **Sensory:** Something you can feel, hear, see, smell, or taste. This show uses lots of sensory experiences like sound, movement, and touch.
- **Set:** The space and objects used on stage to help tell the story. In this show, the set includes icebergs, snow, and cardboard boxes.
- **Non-verbal:** A way of telling a story without using words. The actors use movement, music, and expression instead of talking.
- **Soundscape:** A mix of sounds that help create the feeling of a place, like wind, cracking ice, or snow falling.
- **Improvisation:** Making up actions or words on the spot. Often used in drama and movement games.
- **Physical Theatre:** Telling a story through the body – using movement, actions, and facial expressions instead of speaking.
- **Endurance:** The name of Shackleton's ship and also a word that means the ability to keep going, even when it's very tough.
- **Iceberg:** A large piece of ice floating in the ocean. Most of it is hidden under the water!
- **Empathy:** Understanding how someone else feels. This show helps us connect with others' emotions.

Activities in the classroom



Creative Arts (Dance) activities for the classroom

Animal Movement Exploration: Have students move around the room as different Antarctic animals. Prompt them with imagery:

- “Waddle like a penguin over icy rocks.”
- “Slide on your belly like a seal escaping into water.”
- “Glide like a snowy albatross floating through the cold sky.”
- Encourage students to explore levels (low = seal, medium = penguin, high = bird), tempo (slow vs quick), and direction (forward, backward, turning).

Freeze Dance: Play ambient music or an [Antarctica-inspired soundscape](#) and have students dance freely around the room. When the music stops, they must freeze like they’ve been frozen in ice. Encourage creative frozen shapes (e.g., arms like icicles, curled up from cold). Reflect after each round: “What helped you stop quickly? What shapes did you make?”

Movement Mapping of Shackleton’s Journey: Divide the story into parts: preparing to sail, hitting the ice, losing the ship, and surviving. Assign each part a movement (e.g., rowing with arms, trudging with heavy steps). In small groups, have students link movements into a short performance. Narrate or use music to accompany the movement journey.

Emotional Response through Dance: Have students identify emotions they saw or felt during the show (e.g., fear, teamwork, relief). Ask them to express each through a movement:

- Fear: small, shaky, closed-in movement.
- Relief: open, slow, stretching movement.
- Then link emotions into a short solo or group movement phrase. Share with the class and explain choices.

Icy Landscape Dance Creation: In small groups, have students imagine an Antarctic landscape (e.g., a blizzard, frozen sea, iceberg cliffs). Using movement, they create a short piece that shows how the environment affects how people or animals move. Encourage use of space, pathways, and levels.

Improvised Group Dance – Surviving the Storm: Play a dramatic soundscape of wind, cracking ice, and snow. Students improvise movement as a group, imagining they are caught in a storm and helping each other survive. Encourage physical support (holding hands, guiding), mirroring, and shared gestures of protection.



PDHPE activities for the classroom

Teamwork Brainstorm: Ask students to define teamwork and discuss what makes a good team member. Create a class mind map with qualities such as Listening, Helping, Being kind and Encouraging others.

- Relate it to Shackleton's crew: "What would happen if they didn't work as a team?"

Polar Explorer Obstacle Course: Set up an indoor or outdoor obstacle course using cones, mats, and chairs to represent Antarctic terrain. Examples:

- Step between "icebergs" (hoops)
- Crawl under "caves" (tables)
- Balance on a "sled" (taped lines)
- Have students must complete the course in pairs while communicating and helping each other.

Mindful Explorers Moment: Use [calming music or ambient sounds for atmosphere](#). Guide students through a 5-minute mindfulness session. Ask them to sit or lie comfortably and imagine they are in a quiet, snowy landscape. Use prompts:

- "What do you hear? "How does the cold feel on your face?"
- "Can you take a deep breath like you're breathing in the cold air?"

Rescue Team Roleplay: Give groups a challenge scenario: "Your teammate has fallen into a crevasse. You must help them without using your hands." Provide simple props (e.g., string, paper, chairs). Students work together and reflect on:

- What worked well?
- Who took leadership?
- How did you communicate?

Emotions Chart Reflection: Have students draw or complete a feelings chart, matching emotions with scenes from the show:

- "I felt excited when..."
- "I felt worried when..."

Cold Weather Survival Tips: Students work in pairs to research how to survive extreme cold. Use books, videos or articles. They create a "Top 5 Tips" poster, including:

- What to wear
- What to eat
- How to stay safe
- How to help others
- Extension: Act out a cold-weather emergency and demonstrate their tips.

Geography activities for the classroom

Locate Antarctica: Using an atlas or online map tool ([Google Earth](#)), have students find Antarctica.

- “Which continent is closest?”
- “What’s the weather like there?”
- “Can people live there?”
- Compare with Australia. Create a simple Venn diagram to show similarities/differences.

Weather Watch Comparison: Look up the daily temperature in your suburb and in Antarctica. Record on the board or in student journals.

- “What would you wear there?”
- “What animals could survive in this cold?”

Antarctic Animals Fact File: Assign or let students choose an Antarctic animal (e.g., emperor penguin, leopard seal, orca). They research and draw:

- What it eats
- How it moves
- How it survives the cold
- Students can create mini fact books or posters to share.

Mapping the Journey: Give students a map of Antarctica and plot Shackleton’s real journey using symbols (e.g., boat = departure, X = ship sinking). Students can add their own captions or flags describing each stage.

Habitat Comparison Chart: Have students create a comparison table or poster comparing Antarctica and another environment (e.g., rainforest or desert). Include:

- Climate
- Wildlife
- Human activity
- Use visuals, drawings, and keywords.

Design an Antarctic Research Base: Ask students to draw and label a research station that could survive in Antarctica. Include:

- Shelter
- Heating
- Food storage
- Snowmobiles or emergency equipment
- Have students present their designs and explain why each part is important.

Creative Arts (Music) activities for the classroom

Soundscape Listening & Prediction: Play short sound clips: [Howling wind](#), [Water dripping](#), [Crunching ice](#). Ask students:

- “What might be happening?”
- “What kind of place does this sound come from?”
- Have them draw what they imagine while listening.

Create a Cold World Sound Orchestra: Split the class into small groups. Assign objects to create different sounds:

- Plastic for cracking ice
- Tissue paper for snow
- Drum or tapping for footsteps
- Have each group practise their sound and then perform all together, layering the sounds into a scene.

Rhythm of the Journey: Teach simple body percussion rhythms for scenes in the journey (marching = clap, stomp; storm = pat knees). Students take turns leading or layering sounds to create a musical sequence.

Recreate a Scene with Sound: Students choose a moment from the show and recreate it using instruments or found objects. For example:

- Crashing ice = metal spoons
- Whispering wind = blowing on bottles
- Have students perform their soundscape and describe the scene it represents.

Music and Mood Reflection: Ask students to choose a scene they remember and describe how the music made them feel. Have students reflect on this in their books with the prompts: “Was the music fast? Loud? Calm?”

Draw the Music: While listening to an excerpt from the show or similar music, have students draw abstract shapes or patterns to represent what they hear. Discuss:

- “Did you draw fast or slow lines?”
- “What colours match the sound?”
- Then have students turning the drawing back into a sound performance.



Creative Arts (Drama) activities for the classroom

In-Role Interviews: Have students take turns being characters like Shackleton or a penguin. The rest of the class asks questions:

- “What are you packing for the journey?”
- “What do you miss from home?”
- Encourage them to speak in character using gestures and expression.

Frozen Feelings Tableaux: Students work in groups to create frozen scenes showing emotions from the journey. Call out feelings (“bravery,” “fear,” “hope”), and have each group pose accordingly. Ask others to guess the emotion and scene.

Cold Reaction Warm-Up: Lead students in warming up by pretending to react to cold:

- Teeth chattering
- Stomping to stay warm
- Huddling together
- Then extend to creative movement around the room imagining a snowstorm hits.

Re-enact the Expedition: In small groups, students retell key moments from the show through a 2–3 minute skit. Assign roles (e.g., Shackleton, crew member, storm). Provide simple props (scarves, chairs) and allow time for rehearsal and performance.

Roleplay Life on the Endurance: Students imagine they are stuck on the ship. In pairs or small groups, they act out scenarios:

- Preparing food
- Fixing equipment
- Encouraging a scared teammate

Imaginary Radio Interview/Hotseat: In pairs, students perform an interview: one as a radio host, the other as a returned explorer. Use questions like:

- “What was the hardest part of the journey?”
- “What did you learn about your team?”
- Students can record or present interviews for the class.

Curriculum links and resources



Curriculum Links

Connecting with the classroom

Geography

- **Early Stage 1: GEe-1** identifies places and develops an understanding of the importance of places to people
- **Stage 1: GE1-1** describes features of places and the connections people have with places
- **Stage 1: GE1-2** identifies ways in which people interact with and care for places
- **Stage 2: GE2-1** examines features and characteristics of places and environments
- **Stage 2: GE2-2** describes the ways people, places and environments interact

Creative Arts (Drama)

- **Early Stage 1: DRAES1.4** Responds to dramatic experiences
- **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

Curriculum Links

Connecting with the classroom

Creative Arts (Music)

- **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.

Creative Arts (Dance)

- **Early Stage 1: DAES1.3** Responds to and communicates about the dances they view and/or experience
- **Stage 1: DAS1.3** Gives personal opinions about the dances and their purpose that they view and/or experience
- **Stage 2: DAS2.3** Gives personal opinions about the use of elements and meaning in their own and others' dances.

PDHPE

- **Early Stage 1: PDe-10** uses interpersonal skills to effectively interact with others
- **Stage 1: PD1-10** describes and practises interpersonal skills to promote inclusion to make themselves and others feel they belong
- **Stage 2: PD2-10** demonstrates a range of interpersonal skills that build and enhance relationships and promote inclusion in various situations

Resources

More about the Sydney Opera House

Sydney Opera House: Our Story

- <https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/our-story>

How we work – strategic plans and programs

- <https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/about-us/how-we-work>

Community projects

- <https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/about-us/in-the-community>

Careers and opportunities

- <https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/about-us/careers-and-other-opportunities>

Creative Learning resources

- <https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/schools/learning-resources>

Get in touch

Got questions? Contact us with any enquiries about our creative learning programs for schools via phone or email.

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