



Australian  
Chamber  
Orchestra

# Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

based on the book by Mem Fox & Julie Vivas

Created and performed by the Australian Chamber Orchestra



Teaching Resources

## About The Show

# Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

**Based on the classic picture book by  
Mem Fox, illustrated by Jane Tanner**

There was once a small boy called Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge and his house was next door to an old people's home. He knew all the people who lived there, but his favourite person of all was Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper. When Wilfrid finds out that Nancy has lost her memory, he sets out to find out what a memory is...

This delightful production, based on the poignant picture book by Mem Fox and Julie Vivas, weaves together captivating storytelling with mesmerising new music performed by a string quartet in an immersive and intimate performance. Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge is the perfect introduction to live classical music, guaranteed to entrance audiences both young and old.

## CREDITS

Adapted & Directed by Sandra Eldridge  
Music by Paul Stanhope  
Production Design by Kelsey Lee

## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

The following Unit of Work is designed to introduce K – 2 students to the book *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* as preparation and follow up for seeing the live performance. Lessons address both English and Music syllabus outcomes.

Feel free to use these materials in any way you think will best work for you and your students, picking, choosing and adapting activities as you see fit. Some activities might be too advanced for Kindergarten students, so please adapt activities for your students accordingly.

## Recommended Resources & Further Reading

### The Book

Mem Fox talking about the inspiration and people behind Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge:  
<https://memfox.com/gossip-behind-mems-books/wilfrid-gordon-mcdonald-partridge/>

Audio reading of the book by Mem Fox: <https://memfox.com/books/wilfrid-gordon-mcdonald-partridge/>

YouTube reading of the book: <https://youtu.be/usnOEnTXabw>

### String Instruments

Introducing the String Family (ACO Music & Art video lesson):  
<https://youtu.be/ccrvriyubD8>

Karen Meets the Strings:  
<https://youtu.be/xznJAc2Cjk0>

George Meets the Orchestra:  
<https://youtu.be/M0Jc4sPOBEE>

### Lesson plan ideas

Further lesson plan ideas can be found here:  
<https://readingaustralia.com.au/lesson/wilfrid-gordon-mcdonald-partridge/>

### Intergenerational Projects

Watch 'The Old People's Home for 4-year olds' on ABC iView for inspiration and ideas on intergenerational relationships:  
<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/old-people-s-home-for-4-year-olds>

# Unit Outcomes

Class:

Date:

## UNIT OF WORK

# Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

## SYLLABUS OBJECTIVES

### English

- Communicates through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.
- Uses language to shape and make meaning according to purpose, audience and context
- Thinks in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretive and critical
- Expresses themselves and their relationships with others and their world

### Music

- Listens to and responds to music

### Resources

- Class book of *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox (or access to an online version)
- Worksheets (see Appendix)
- Pencils, paper, scissors and glue
- Interactive whiteboard or screen for videos

## SYLLABUS OUTCOMES

### Early Stage 1

#### ENe-1A

Communicates with peers and known adults in informal and guided activities demonstrating emerging skills of group interaction

#### ENe-2A

Composes simple texts to convey an idea or message

#### ENe-6B

Recognises that there are different kinds of spoken texts with specific language features and shows an emerging awareness of some purposes for spoken language

#### ENe-10C

Thinks imaginatively and creatively about familiar topics, simple ideas and the basic features of texts when responding to and composing texts

#### ENe-11D

Responds to and composes simple texts about familiar aspects of the world and their own experiences

#### MUES1.4

Listens to and responds to music

### Stage 1

#### EN1-1A

Communicates with a range of people in informal and guided activities demonstrating interaction skills and considers how own communication is adjusted in different situations

#### EN1-2A

Plans, composes and reviews a small range of simple texts for a variety of purposes on familiar topics for known readers and viewers

#### EN1-6B

Recognises a range of purposes and audiences for spoken language and recognises organisational patterns and features of predictable spoken texts

#### EN1-10C

Thinks imaginatively and creatively about familiar topics, ideas and texts when responding to and composing texts

#### EN1-11D

Responds to and composes a range of texts about familiar aspects of the world and their own experiences

#### MUS1.4

Responds to a range of music, expressing likes and dislikes and the reasons for these choices.

# Before The Show

## You Will Need:

- The book of *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*
- Character worksheets
- Pencils

## Lesson One

# Introducing The Book & Its Characters

### Activity 1

#### Think – Pair – Share

5 - 10 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Activate knowledge and ideas: What is an old person?
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Ask students to consider what they know about 'old people'. Students should first think of their responses, then discuss with a partner, then share their responses with the class.</p> <p>They might like to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>How old are old people?</i></li><li>▪ <i>What do you know about them?</i></li><li>▪ <i>Do you know any old people?</i></li><li>▪ <i>Where do old people live?</i></li></ul> <p>You might also like to talk with the students about what an 'old person's home' is. Have any of them ever been to one? What do they know about them?</p>

### Activity 2

#### Reading the book

10 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Read <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> and identify the main themes
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Show the students the cover of the book. Ask them what they think the book might be about by looking at the picture on the cover.</p> <p>Read the students the book, using different character voices and taking time to look at all the pictures. (If you can't access a copy of the book, you can watch a reading on YouTube).</p> <p>At the end of the reading, ask students what they think the book is about. Identify the main themes of <b>friendship</b> and <b>memory</b>. You might like to discuss the idea of memories a little more and explain that when people get older it is possible for people to lose their memory.</p>

### Activity 3

#### Character analysis

10 - 15 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Use the text and inference to describe features of characters
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Put students in six small groups and assign them one of the older characters from the book – Miss Mitchell, Mrs Jordan, Mr Drysdale, Mr Tippet, Mr Hosking and Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper.</p> <p>Give each group a different <b>character worksheet</b> (see worksheet) and ask students to talk about / write down some words to describe their character. It might be things they remember from the book or could be things they infer by looking at the picture.</p> <p><i>Extension – ask students to think about what their character might have been like as a young person.</i></p> <p>Have students come back to the class and share a description of their character.</p>

## Lesson Two

# Memories

### You Will Need:

- The book of *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*
- Memories worksheets
- Pencils and glue

### Activity 1

#### What is a memory?

5 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Activate knowledge about memories
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Start this lesson with another reading of the book <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i>. Following the reading have a class discussion: ask students to tell you what they think a 'memory' is.</p> <p>Next, ask students to recall from the book what some of the old people told Wilfrid a memory was:</p> <p><i>Mrs Jordan</i> – “something warm”  <i>Mr Hosking</i> – “something from long ago”  <i>Mr Tippett</i> – “something that makes you cry”  <i>Miss Mitchell</i> – “something that makes you laugh”  <i>Mr Drysdale</i> – “something as precious as gold”</p>

### Activity 2

#### Representing memories

10 - 15 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Think about how memories might be represented in objects
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Discuss with the students how Wilfrid Gordon went about finding objects that represented each of the memories.</p> <p>Have students complete the <b>memories worksheet</b>, either drawing or cutting and pasting the image of what object Wilfrid chose to represent the following memories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Something from long ago → shells from the beach</li> <li>▪ Something to make you laugh → puppet</li> <li>▪ Something sad → grandfather's medal</li> <li>▪ Something warm → egg</li> <li>▪ Something as precious as gold → his football</li> </ul>

### Activity 3

#### Memory box (homework project & presentation)

2 mins per student

<b>Students will</b>	Create their own memory box and give an oral presentation to the class
<b>Activities</b>	<p><i>This project can be assigned as homework - presentations could take place before or after seeing the show.</i></p> <p>Tell the students they are going to create a 'memory box' just like Wilfrid Gordon did in the book. Their task is to find 3 or 4 objects at home that have special memories for them and put them in a box to bring in to school. If they can't find objects, they might like to use a photo.</p> <p>Suggest students might look for objects that are from a special place they remember going, or something that reminds them of a special person, something that they remember with happiness, or it could be something they remember with sadness.</p> <p>Students collect their items and bring them to class and give an oral presentation – showing each item and explaining what the memory is.</p>



## Lesson Three

# Introducing String Instruments

### You Will Need:

- A screen to play videos

## Activity 1

### Introducing String Instruments (video lesson)

10 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Watch a video about string instruments
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Explain to the students that the performance of <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> they are going to see will be performed by actors and a string quartet of musicians from the Australian Chamber Orchestra.</p> <p>Watch the following video which features musician and educator Sharon Roffman introducing the string family: <a href="https://youtu.be/ccrvriyubD8">https://youtu.be/ccrvriyubD8</a></p> <p>Discuss what students have learnt about string instruments during the video (what they are made of, how they are played, how they make sound, the difference between high and low sounds).</p>

You might like to break these two activities up over separate days.

## Activity 2

### Telling stories through music (video lesson)

10 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Find out more about the string instruments and the kinds of sounds they can make; think about how music can be used to tell a story.
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Have students watch the following video which shows a string quintet performing snippets from another ACO show called <i>There's A Sea in My Bedroom</i>: <a href="https://youtu.be/xznJAc2Cjk0">https://youtu.be/xznJAc2Cjk0</a></p> <p>Discuss some of the ways the string instruments were used to create different emotions and create 'pictures through music'.</p> <p>Tell students to be looking out for how the music is telling the music when they see the show <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i>.</p>

## After the show

### Intergenerational Friendships: Personal Project

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#### Activity 1

#### Class Discussion - Friendship

10 mins

<b>Students will</b>	Activate knowledge and ideas: What makes a good friend?
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Ask students to reflect on the book and the performance of <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> and think about how Wilfrid and Nancy are best friends. Have a class discussion about what good friends do for each other (e.g. they cheer each other up when they are sad, they tell each other secrets, they look after each other etc). You might also like to discuss why it is nice to have friends who are different ages, like Wilfrid and Nancy.</p> <p>Now set up the intergenerational project. Tell the students they are going to choose an older person they know who they are going to establish a friendship with. It might be their grandparent, a neighbour, a friend of their grandparent.</p> <p><i>Note: If students don't have anyone, help them to find someone to connect with. If you can establish a relationship with a local aged care home or retirement village this would be even better!</i></p>

#### Activity 2

#### Letter writing – introduce yourself

30 mins (over 1 – 2 sessions)

<b>Students will</b>	Write a letter introducing themselves to a friend
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Students are going to write a letter to deliver to their older friend. They are going to introduce themselves in the letter (even if they already know the person). In their letter they could do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Tell them about yourself – your name, how old you are</li><li>▪ Tell them about your family</li><li>▪ Tell them about some of your favourite things</li><li>▪ Tell them what do you like doing</li><li>▪ Draw a picture of yourself or stick in a photo of yourself</li></ul> <p><i>Note: Adapt the activity to suit the literacy levels of the students – Kindergarten students might like to draw themselves and just write down some key words about themselves.</i></p> <p>Address the letters and arrange to have them delivered to their older friend. If you can encourage older friends to write a letter back that would be a bonus!</p>

**Activity 3****Interview – memories****Homework Task**

<b>Students will</b>	Interview their older friend about their memories
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Students are now going to have a conversation with their older friend about their memories. If this can take place as a face-to-face discussion that would be ideal, if this is not possible students could create a written questionnaire which they can ask their older friend to fill in.</p> <p>Students need to think of some questions to ask their friend to help them think of some memories. They could ask questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How old are you? What year were you born?</li> <li>▪ Where did you grow up?</li> <li>▪ Do you have any brothers or sisters?</li> <li>▪ Where did you go to school?</li> <li>▪ What did you like doing when you were a child?</li> <li>▪ Did you go on any special holidays?</li> <li>▪ Do you have any special objects you keep?</li> </ul> <p>Students should keep a record of these answers (they could record the conversation or try and write down some of the answers).</p>

**Activity 4****Presentation – My Older Friend****2 mins per student**

<b>Students will</b>	Give an oral presentation about their older friend to the class
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Students should now prepare an oral presentation for the class, telling them all about their older friend. They might create a poster or powerpoint with photos or words or can just give a speech. It would be good if they have a photo of their older friend to show the class.</p> <p>In their presentation, students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce their friend by name, age and explain how they know them</li> <li>▪ Tell them some facts about their friend (e.g. he lives in a nursing home, he has six grandchildren)</li> <li>▪ Tell them one or two of their friend's memories or stories</li> </ul> <p><i>Additional activity: If you can, invite some of the older friends into the classroom to meet and talk to the class as part of the presentations.</i></p>

















**MEMORIES WORKSHEET**

What objects did Wilfrid Gordon find to represent the following memories?

<p><b>Something from <u>long ago</u></b></p>	<p><b>Something to <u>make you laugh</u></b></p>
<p><b>Something which <u>makes you cry</u></b></p>	<p><b>Something <u>warm</u></b></p>
<p><b>Something as <u>precious as gold</u></b></p>	<p><b>Draw your own 'something as precious as gold'</b></p>

**MEMORIES WORKSHEET**

Cut out and stick these pictures into the right box on the worksheet on the previous page.

