



An Esplanade Commission

# Yusof: Portrait of a President

By Teater Ekamatra (Singapore)

21 – 24 Oct 2025

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

## Post-show Educator's Guide

Recommended Level: Secondary

A programme of 60 *Connections – At Home and Afar*, a year-long season of Singapore stories and international collaborations in celebration of SG60.

Dear Educators,

Thank you for giving your students the opportunity to experience *Yusof: Portrait of a President* by Teater Ekamatra. We hope that the dialogue during the play ignited more conversations and awareness amongst your students.

To aid in the expansion of these explorations, we have put together a post-show guide. In this guide, you will find a series of activities that serve as follow-up to the show experience.

Happy exploring!

---

### Activity 1: Facilitating Post-Show Reflections

<b>Objective</b>	Encourage students to recall key moments and themes and relate them to leadership qualities.
<b>Duration</b>	<b>30 – 45 minutes</b>

#### 1. Recall the plot and characters of the play. Teachers can refer students to Activity 4 in the Student Guide for this activity.

- **Recall the Plot and Characters**
  - Who were the central characters in the play?
  - What were the key turning points in Yusof Ishak’s journey?
  - What challenges did he face both in his personal life and as a public figure?
- **Discussion Questions:**
  - What was your biggest takeaway from the play?
  - Which moment in the play left the strongest impression on you, and why?
  - What leadership qualities did Yusof Ishak demonstrate in the play? Can you think of examples from the scenes?
- **Suggested Formats:**
  - **Think-Pair-Share:** Students discuss in pairs before sharing with the class.
  - **Padlet/Google Jamboard:** Students post their thoughts anonymously for open sharing.
  - **Mind Map:** Class creates a visual map linking Yusof Ishak’s qualities to specific scenes.

## Activity 2: Leadership Under Pressure

<b>Objective</b>	Identify and analyse challenges Yusof Ishak faced and explore decision-making under difficult circumstances.
<b>Duration</b>	30 – 45 minutes

Teachers can refer students to Activity 5 in the Student Guide for this activity.

1. In groups, have students identify **three major challenges** Yusof Ishak faced in the play (e.g. political pressures, media control issues, racial unity efforts).
2. For each challenge, answer:
  - What was at stake?
  - What decision did Yusof Ishak make?
  - How did it reflect his values and leadership style?
3. Groups present their findings, followed by a discussion on how these decisions might be approached differently today.

## Activity 3: Values in Action: Hot-Seating

<b>Objective</b>	Practise empathy and perspective-taking by stepping into a character’s shoes.
<b>Duration</b>	30 – 45 minutes

Teachers can refer students to Activity 6 in the Student Guide for this activity.

1. Assign students to “hot-seat” as Yusof Ishak, Puan Noor Aishah, Ramley, Aziz, or Tunku Abdul Rahman.
2. Classmates ask open-ended questions about motivations, feelings, and decisions during the events in the play.
3. Reflect: Did stepping into the character change your understanding of the challenges they faced?

#### Activity 4: Then and Now – Comparing Historical and Present-Day Leadership

<b>Objective</b>	Connect themes in the play to contemporary issues.
<b>Duration</b>	30 – 45 minutes

Teachers can refer students to Activity 7 in the Student Guide for this activity.

1. Identify issues Yusof Ishak dealt with (e.g. unity in diversity, press freedom, political transitions).
2. Compare these with similar issues happening/taking place in Singapore or globally today.
3. Discuss:
  - Are the challenges faced by leaders today the same or different?
  - What lessons from Yusof Ishak’s story remain relevant?

Interested to learn more about the arts? Check out [www.esplanade.com/schools](http://www.esplanade.com/schools) for more resources and content!



Principal Sponsors

A&O SHEARMAN Bloomberg Deloitte.



Principal Sponsor



Supporting Sponsors



Supported By

How's Catering  
Matthew Teng  
Saw Wei Jie



#EsplanadeSG #WonderHere