

Act 1 Scene 3

Power

The world of Australia at the time of the play is one run by power and status. In Britain the class system maintained the status of the upper classes whilst also serving the purpose of keeping sections of society segregated to ensure that no unwelcome influences were felt in the upper echelons of society. In Sydney in 1788, despite thousands of miles difference, this system still existed. Society was very much divided into the diagram below.



Irish convicts were at the bottom because they were not trusted by those in power. Most were in prison for political crimes against the British government and so were thought most likely to mutiny or escape.

This rank and order operated alongside the military ranking system which made things even more confusing. The convicts however always knew that they were at the bottom of the pile. This order could decide the amount of food that you were rationed, where you could live, the freedom that you enjoyed and even the punishments that you would receive.

Exercise

This exercise will explore the ways that power can be presented to an audience in subtle but noticeable ways. It is based around the values of playing cards. For this exercise the ace represents a power value of one (the least) and a king a power level of thirteen (the most).



“The quick execution of justice for the good of the colony, Governor.”