

Suggested Lesson Ideas for Drama at Key Stage 3

Lesson 1: Developing Improvisation and Debate Using Tableaux

Background

Before starting the lesson, ask your pupils to research the format and organisation of a courtroom scenario. Tell them that they will be taking on roles of people who work in a courtroom through tableaux and improvisation.

Ask the class to work in the drama studio or in an open space in the classroom. Lead the class in a physical warm-up with a range of exercises to loosen the body. Build a short routine to music. Lead the class in a vocal warm-up, using the articulation scale and vowel exercises, adding other vocal exercises. Ask two pupils to lead the next warm-up routine and vocal exercises.

Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning to:

- develop improvisation and debate;
- use tableaux as a form of expression; and
- examine options and weigh up pros and cons (Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making).

Success Criteria

Pupils can:

- take on a role in a court situation and present information in character;
- work in groups to develop tableaux and improvisation; and
- consider a range of factors to inform their improvisation.

Resources

Research stories from the media to collect appropriate information. Set 2 Thinking Cards: [2.11 Consider all factors](#).

Introduction

Use the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to introduce and discuss what the pupils are going to learn about and what they should be aiming toward to be successful. Include TS&PC in the discussion so that pupils are aware of the skills or capabilities they are using and developing.

Key Stage 3

Drama

Introduce a scenario to the class where a local town is to lose their greenfield site to a supermarket. There are plans in place, but the court will make the final decision after listening to arguments from both sides.

Lesson Development

Ask your pupils to:

- begin an exercise on status and arrange themselves in a line from smallest to tallest, youngest to oldest or the number of their house;
- make a list of the people in a court room situation, for example witness, solicitor, judge, barrister, juror, plaintiff, defendant, public, reporter or clerk, ranking them in order of importance or hierarchy (*there is no correct order, but pupils' discussion is important*);
- form groups of 4 to 6 to set up a range of tableaux and then develop these into improvisations involving, for example local shopkeepers objecting to the supermarket, planners and architects planning the supermarket's potential, local conservationists, local school groups, local shoppers or business people;
- present their short scene, use the Consider all Factors thinking card to structure their thinking when considering a range of ideas;
- take on the roles of judge, jury, prosecution and defence lawyers and a range of characters such as shopkeeper, school principal or town planner and present evidence for and against building a new supermarket;
- explore the procedures of a courtroom, including the protocols and questioning which they prepare and then present in improvised format; and
- conclude with a decision from a jury.

Plenary

Discuss your pupils' understanding of the legal system and the outcome of their case. Examine how to debate and argue effectively and how to use tableau and improvisation for developing character. Use the same format for a different situation that your pupils suggest.

Ask some follow-up questions such as:

What are the characteristics of a good debate?

How can you argue your point without causing offence?

How effective was your group at making decisions?

Key Stage 3 Drama

What part of the activity did you find most challenging?

What key learning points from this activity will be useful in the future?

How does using tableau and improvisation help you express your thoughts and opinions?



Lesson 2: Introducing Script Writing and Writing in Role using Freeze Frame

Background

In the drama studio or in an open space in the classroom, ask two pupils to lead a physical warm-up using a range of exercises to loosen the body. Build a short routine to music that you introduce. Ask your pupils to lead a vocal warm-up, using the articulation scale and vowel exercises as well as adding their own vocal exercises. Ask two pupils to lead the next warm-up routine and vocal exercises.

Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning to:

- develop the structure and format of script writing, using freeze frames;
- create new and original scripts;
- use their own and others' ideas to locate sources of information (Managing Information); and
- make ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions and outcomes (Being Creative).

Success Criteria

Pupils can:

- write and present new scripts in groups using a range of sources and formats;
- carry out research using a range of sources; and
- experiment with their ideas to produce and present scripts.

Resources

Vocal and physical warm-up exercises

Suitable music

Short melodrama script with a villain, victim and hero

Introduction

Use the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to introduce and talk about what the pupils are going to learn and what they should be aiming toward to be successful. Include TS&PC in the discussion so that pupils are aware of the skills or capabilities they are using and developing.



Key Stage 3

Drama

Ask your pupils to research the background of melodrama and discuss their selected information on Victorian Music Hall Theatre. This should include using stock characters, costuming, music, movement, voice or gestures and short scenes of tragicomedy.

Give your pupils the short script:

Villain: 'You must pay the rent.'

Young Girl: 'I can't pay the rent.' (Repeat both lines.)

Villain: 'Then I will throw you out into the snow.'

Hero: 'I'll pay the rent.'

Young Girl: 'My hero.'

Villain: 'Drat.'

Encourage your pupils to discuss the script content and context.

Lesson Development

Ask your pupils to:

- form groups of 3 or 4 to cast the script, perhaps using a director, and present a reading of the script;
- review the short play script and look at the format used for writing a play, including use of character name, colon, spacing, italics, stage directions and capital letters;
- use freeze frames on each line to look at gesture, movement and facial expressions;
- discuss vocal quality and range of voice for each character;
- add appropriate simple stage directions to help the actor perform the script, for example *louder*, *moving forward*, *pointing his finger*, *falling on her knees* or *grinning wickedly*;
- present the script again, learning and improvising the script and reviewing the stage directions;
- research different styles of theatre beginning with tragedy and comedy, adding other styles such as pantomime, opera, silent movie, spy, cowboy western or soap opera;
- present the script in a different style by changing it and the stage directions, as appropriate; and
- present their new scripts for the class.

Plenary

Ask your pupils what they have learned about melodrama and Victorian Theatre. Encourage them to analyse what makes a play script and how stage directions help actors and directors in a performance.

Ask follow-up questions such as:

What are the characteristics of melodrama and Victorian Theatre?

How is this different to other types of theatre you have studied?

What makes an effective script and why?

What have you learned about writing and presenting scripts?

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to write a script for a play?

How did you go about researching information? Was this the best way?

What was it like to work in groups to create and present new scripts?

How did you decide on the final product?

What part of the activity did you find most challenging?

What are the key learning points from this activity?



Lesson 3: Using Forum Theatre, Freeze Frame, Decision Making and Working Together

Background

In the drama studio or in an open space in the classroom, ask two pupils to lead a physical warm-up using a range of exercises to loosen the body. Encourage them to teach the rest of the class a short sequence of moves, using music. In the next warm-up, ask another two pupils to add a new sequence.

Encourage the pupils to lead a vocal warm-up, using the articulation scale and vowel exercises as well as adding their own vocal exercises. Then ask the two pupils to lead the next warm-up routine and to extend the movement sequence and develop the range of vocal exercises.

Forum Theatre: pupils can predict or change a scene that they have created.

Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning to:

- use forum theatre as a strategy to extend and develop a story;
- listen actively and share opinions (Working with Others); and
- make ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions and outcomes (Being Creative).

Success Criteria

Pupils can:

- demonstrate strategies such as freeze frame, improvisation and thought tracking to reflect their understanding of forum theatre; and
- work collaboratively and use a range of ideas to move a story on.

Resources

Vocal and physical warm-up exercises for the whole class, freeze frames and forum theatre

The extract from *To Kill a Mocking Bird* by Harper Lee when Atticus is sitting outside the prison and the locals turn up to spring Tom and Scout, Jem and Dill appear (Chapter XV pages 156/157 (Heinemann))

Introduction

Use the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to introduce and discuss what the pupils are going to learn about and what they should be aiming toward to be successful. Include TS&PC in the discussion so that pupils are aware of the skills or capabilities they are using and developing.

Give your pupils a brief background to the novel: the social and political background of the small southern town of Maycomb, Alabama in 1930s and the brief story of Tom Robinson and the Ewell family.

Lesson Development

Read the short extract from the novel to the class and discuss the situation with your pupils.

Ask your pupils to:

- divide into groups and present some freeze frames to reflect their understanding of the situation;
- adopt the roles of Mr Underwood, Atticus, Tom, Scout, Jem, Dill and a range of local farmers;
- position themselves effectively around the classroom to create the scene at the end of the extract;
- freeze their character and look at their facial expressions, gestures and movement;
- thought track their characters so that they can all think in role at this moment and understand their intentions and what might happen next;
- move the scene on physically and vocally, as individuals or in groups; and
- listen as you read the next few sentences of the extract.

Plenary

Review what makes effective freeze frames and how thought tracking helps to think and write in role. Ask your pupils to review what they understand about forum theatre and how they can create a scene from a story, understanding the difference in thinking when you are part of a crowd or an individual. Use other extracts from novels in this format.

Ask some follow-up questions:

How would you know if your freeze frame was effective in portraying a message?

How does thought tracking help you explore a role?

What have you learned about forum theatre?

Key Stage 3 Drama

What was beneficial about working with others to create and present new stories?

What was challenging about working with others?

Is it easier to work alone or with another person? Why?

What part of the activity did you find most enjoyable?

What are the key learning points from this activity?

