

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN

Theater and Writing Infused Lesson

Lesson Three: *Improvised Arguments*

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Enduring Understanding

Characters, actors, and writers can develop and strengthen their own arguments by understanding other points of view.

Lesson Description (Use for family communication and displaying student art)

In this theater and writing lesson, students explore two different characters whose opposing points of view or arguments create a conflict. They identify the objectives or arguments for each character. They act out a scene between those two characters multiple times, playing both characters. They write an argument from one character's point of view, and support it with evidence.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Generates reasons to support a character's argument/objective in a conflict.

Criteria: Uses improvised dialogue to express what a character wants in a role play.

Target: Thinks critically by analyzing and evaluating an alternative point of view.

Criteria: Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.

Target: Writes an argument supported by evidence.

Criteria: Explains a character's point of view through at least four specific reasons or pieces of evidence.

Vocabulary

Arts Infused:

Action
Character
Communication
Conflict
Critical Thinking
Dialogue
Emotion
Exaggerate
Line
Objective
Point of View
Scene
Tactic

Writing:

Argument
Claim
Evidence
Reasons

continued

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

Seattle Children's Theatre

Tacoma, WA

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts

Materials

Arts Impact journals; Lesson 1
brainstorm lists; Lesson 2 character
lines; Character conflict from content
study (optional); Class Assessment
Worksheet

Learning Standards

WA Arts State Grade Level Expectations

For the full description of each WA State Arts
Grade Level Expectation, see:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Arts/Standards>

1.1.1 Concepts: character, conflict
1.2.1 Skills and Techniques: movement/stance,
gesture, facial expression
1.2.2 Skills and Techniques: voice
1.4.1 Audience Skills
2.1.1 Creative Process
2.2.1 Performance Process
2.3.1 Responding Process
3.1.1 Communicates through the Arts
4.2.1 Connects Theater and Writing

Common Core State Standards in ELA

For a full description of CCSS Standards by grade
level see:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/ELAstandards/>

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in
an analysis of substantive topics or texts using
valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient
evidence.

continued

Arts:

Actor Neutral
Body Position/Pose
Gesture
Improvisation
Movement
Statue
Vocal Expression

W.6.1.A Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.

W.6.1.B Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

W.6.1.C Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

WHST.6-8.1 Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific* content.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

SL.6.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

ICON KEY:

📖 = Indicates note or reminder for teacher

☑ = Embedded assessment points in the lesson

Pre-Teach

This lesson is the third in a series of three Theater and Writing Infused lessons. Teach Lesson 1, *Persuasive Physical Actions & Objectives*, and Lesson 2, *Persuasive Actions with Vocal Expression*, before this lesson.

Optional: Reference character conflict from content study.

Lesson Steps Outline

1. Review the concepts of objective, tactic/action, and argument.
2. Warm up students by guiding them to review and combine statues, actions, and lines from Lessons 1 and 2.
3. Introduce Round Robin Improvisation. Work with students to determine a pair of characters in conflict (or select from content study). Discuss possible arguments/objectives for each character and write them on board.
4. Facilitate the improvisation. Remind students of 21st Century Skill of Communication.

☑ Criteria-based process reflection: Uses improvised dialogue to express what one character wants in a role play.

5. Instruct students to switch places with their current partners so they are standing in the position of the opposite character for the improvisation. Then instruct the new inner circle to rotate to stand in front of a new partner.

☑ Criteria-based process reflection: Uses improvised dialogue to express what one character wants in a role play.

6. Introduce the 21st Century Skill of Critical Thinking. Guide students in using critical thinking skills to reflect with peers about the actions and reasons for each argument.

☑ Criteria-based process reflection: Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.

7. Instruct students to reflect individually in writing.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and self-assessment: Uses improvised dialogue to express what one character wants in a role play. Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.

8. Instruct students to write an argument from the point of view of a character from Round Robin Improvisation.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and self-assessment: Explains a character's point of view through at least four specific reasons or pieces of evidence. Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.

LESSON STEPS

1. Review the concepts of objective, tactic/action, and argument.

- *In our last two lessons, we looked at what characters do, what they say, and how they say it when they make an argument or try to achieve an objective. Today, we'll put our voices and bodies together and act out some of these arguments.*
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2. Warm up students by guiding them to review and combine statues, actions, and lines from Lessons 1 and 2.

- *Let's warm up by putting together our Lesson 1 statues with our Lesson 2 lines. Have your journals open to your lines of dialogue, and stand where you have some room.*
 - *I'll give you a freeze to get into a statue of an action. When I say, "go," say the line that goes with that action. You can stay frozen, or you can move. Use your emotion and vocal expression. Exaggerate to communicate with both your voice and body.*
 - *Let's start with one we all did together: beg. Show me a statue of "bargain." 1-2-3-Freeze. Now say the line—go! Actor neutral.*
 - *Now try the lines you wrote. You have different actions and lines, but I'll prompt you together. Show me your statue, 1-2-3-Freeze! Now say the line—go! Actor neutral.*
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3. Introduce Round Robin Improvisation. Work with students to determine a pair of characters in conflict (or select from content study). Discuss possible arguments/objectives for each character and write them on board.

▣ Review and post action brainstorm list.

- *Today we'll put those arguments into a conflict—a problem between two people who each have a different objective.*
- *In an improvisation, actors act out a scene without a script. You figure out what to say as you go, just like in real life. You'll communicate your own character's argument and reasons, but you'll also listen and respond to a different point of view.*

Sample bullying conflict:

The scene is between a bystander and a target of bullying. In the hallway after school, Chris hears some kids picking on Alex. Chris has seen these kids bullying other students in their class before. They tease and make fun of Alex. Then they laugh and walk away. Chris and Alex are left alone together. What would be Chris's argument? Maybe Chris wants Alex to go and tell the principal. Why? What would be Alex's argument? Maybe Alex wants Chris to keep the bullying a secret. Why?

Sample civil rights movement conflict (Social Studies):

The scene is between a parent and child during the 1960's. The child wants to participate in a sit-in at the local Woolworth's. S/he needs the parent's permission to go with the group. The parent thinks that the protests are too dangerous. S/he wants the child to promise not to get involved. What might their arguments be? They each want to convince the other to agree with their own point of view. What would be some of the reasons they would each have?

- *I'll write the character objectives on the board, so you can look at them if you get stuck. I'll also post our list of actions you might use.*
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4. Facilitate the improvisation. Remind students of 21st Century Skill of Communication.

▣ Guide students to create two circles, one inside the other, so they are facing their partners. Call "Freeze" after the scene has run for about 1 minute. Rotate the inner circle one partner while the outer circle stands still. Repeat scene, then freeze and rotate again.

▣ If the number of students is uneven, one student can stand in an observing spot in the outer circle (this position will rotate, so any student will only observe for one round).

- *You'll act out this scene multiple times, as both characters, working with different partners each time. The outside circle is Alex, the target. The inside circle is Chris, the bystander. Everyone plays the scene at the same time.*
- *Keep the scene going. Listen and respond to your partner's evidence, but don't give in to their argument, even if you want to!*
- *Use the effective communication skills we learned in our other theater lessons – listen actively; express your ideas – physically and verbally; and respond to others.*
- *Outer circle, take two steps away from your partner. The scene begins when Chris walks up to Alex. Think about what action and reason you'll use first. Listen and respond to your partner. Keep going until I call Freeze. Go!*
- *Outer circle, stay where you are. Inner circle, look to your left. Move one person to the left. You should now be standing in front of a new partner. Same scene, same characters, same arguments and objectives. Think about the actions and reasons you just used. Decide if you'll try the same thing or something different. Listen and respond to your partner. Keep going until I call Freeze. Go!*

☑ Criteria-based process reflection: Uses improvised dialogue to express what one character wants in a role play.

5. Instruct students to switch places with their current partners so they are standing in the position of the opposite character for the improvisation. Then instruct the new inner circle to rotate to stand in front of a new partner.

▣ Repeat until each student has played each character 2-3 times.

- *Stand facing your partner. Switch places. If you've been playing Alex, you should be in the Chris position. If you've been playing Chris, you should be in the Alex position. Now, inner circle, look to your right. Move one person to the right. You should now be standing in front of a new partner. Same scene, same arguments and objectives – but now you're the other character.*
- *Let's review: what's Chris's objective? What's Alex's objective? Think about the actions and reasons some of your past partners used. Decide if you'll try one of those or something different. Listen and respond to your partner. Keep the scene going until I call Freeze. Go!*

☑ Criteria-based process reflection: Uses improvised dialogue to express what one character wants in a role play.

6. Introduce the 21st Century Skill of Critical Thinking. Guide students in using critical thinking skills to reflect with peers about the actions and reasons for each argument.

- *An important 21st Century Skill that both actors and writers use is Critical Thinking. When you think critically about something you ask clarifying questions; use evidence to question or explain your creative choices; and construct meaning.*
- *What actions or reasons did you use to support your argument? Why?*
- *What actions or reasons did your partner use that made you want to give in to their argument? Why were those effective?*
- *What did you say or hear that was realistic—that was true or would work in real life?*
- *How did your partner’s arguments impact or change yours?*
- *Was there a character whose argument you agreed with more?*

Criteria-based process reflection: Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.

7. Instruct students to reflect individually in writing.

- *Choose one example of a line you said that was impacted by something your partner said. Explain how you responded and why in your journal.*

When (character name) _____ said “_____,” I said “_____” because _____ (reason) _____.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and self-assessment: Uses improvised dialogue to express what one character wants in a role play. Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.

POST LESSON WRITING

8. Instruct students to write an argument from the point of view of a character from Round Robin Improvisation.

- *An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that your position or belief is valid.*
- *Choose a character and explain their argument. Give at least four reasons with evidence to support their position.*
- *Use critical thinking to explain how or why you believe those reasons supported the arguments.*
- *You may write from that character's point of view, or from your own, describing the character.*
- *Use the following sentence starters:*

As the character _____, my argument in the scene was _____.

I or s/he believed this because:

1. _____ ,
2. _____ ,
3. _____, and
4. _____.

An action I or s/he used was _____ because _____.

An emotion I or s/he expressed was _____ because _____.

An example of a line I or s/he said to express the argument was _____ because _____.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and self-assessment: Explains a character's point of view through at least four specific reasons or pieces of evidence. Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Sixth Grade Lesson Three: *Improvised Arguments*

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines	THEATER	THEATER/WRITING/ 21ST C. SKILLS	WRITING				Total
Concept	Improvisation	Critical Thinking	Argument				6
Criteria	Uses improvised dialogue to express what a character wants in a role play.	Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.	Explains a character’s point of view through at least four specific reasons or pieces of evidence.				
Student Name			one	two	three	four	

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Sixth Grade Lesson Three: *Improvised Arguments*

CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines	THEATER	THEATER/WRITING/ 21ST C. SKILLS	WRITING				Total 6
Concept	Improvisation	Critical Thinking	Argument				
Criteria	Uses improvised dialogue to express what a character wants in a role play.	Asks clarifying questions; uses evidence to question or explain creative choices; constructs meaning.	Explains a character’s point of view through at least four specific reasons or pieces of evidence.				
Student Name			one	two	three	four	
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29.							
30.							
Total							
Percentage							

What was effective in the lesson? Why?

What do I want to consider for the next time I teach this lesson?

What were the strongest connections between theatre and writing?

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

THEATER AND WRITING LESSON – *Improvised Arguments*

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an **Arts and Writing** lesson. We explored two characters whose opposing points of view or arguments created a conflict.

- We identified the objectives or arguments for two characters in a conflict.
- We improvised a scene between those two characters multiple times, playing both characters.
- We wrote an argument from one character’s point of view, and supported it with evidence.

At home, you could talk about what someone else’s objective or argument might be. When you and your child have a conflict, you could try to imagine each other’s point of view. You could do a role play where you have to speak as each other instead of yourselves.

Enduring Understanding

Characters, actors, and writers can develop and strengthen their own arguments by understanding other points of view.