

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN

Theater and Reading Infused Lesson

Applying Background Knowledge to a Character

Author: Dave Quicksall Grade Level: First



Enduring Understanding

Using sense memory and visualization can strengthen the connection between background knowledge and what is read about characters in a story.

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

Students activate background knowledge from actions, emotions, and events in their own lives in order to make connections to the characters in a story. Students visualize sensory details and actions, then use their voices and bodies to explore a range of conditions, foods, emotions, and states of being that match the characters in the story.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Makes a specific physical choice to convey character actions.

Criteria: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific character behavior.

Target: Makes a specific physical choice to convey character feelings.

Criteria: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific emotion or state of being for a character.

Target: Makes specific physical and vocal choices to convey an action (eating).

Criteria: Uses pantomime, facial expressions, and vocal expressions to reflect the sensory attributes of reacting to a specific object (food).

Target: Applies background knowledge to a selected text.

Criteria: Uses physical and vocal choices to communicate the specific actions and emotions of a character in a story.

Target: Identifies character actions.

Criteria: Notes character action words mined from story.

Vocabulary

Arts Infused:

Action
Character
Emotions
Visualization

Reading:

Background Knowledge

Arts:

Facial Expression
Pantomime
Physical Choice
Sense Memory
Vocal Choice

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

Book-it Reparatory Theatre
Seattle Children's Theatre

Tacoma, WA

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts

Theater and Reading Materials:

"Dragons and Giants" and "Cookies"
from *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold
Lobel (or other book selection), copies
for each student or student group;
White board, document camera, or chart
paper & markers; Class Assessment
Worksheet

Connections:

Teachers College Readers Workshop

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 Elements: Character
- 1.2.1 Skills and Techniques: Movement, 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: Feelings
- 4.2.1 Connection between Theater and Reading

continued

Early Learning Guidelines (Pre-K – Grade 3)

For a full description of Washington State Early Learning and Child Development Guidelines see:

<http://www.del.wa.gov/development/guidelines/>

(1st grade) 3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around: Using the large muscles (gross motor skills); show continuous growth in movement skills. Uses the senses (sensorimotor skills: Use all the senses to observe and explore. (1st grade) 5. Communicating: Speaking and listening: speak clearly to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas; ask and answer questions about key details in stories. Reading: make personal connections with books and stories. (1st grade) 6. Learning about my world: Arts: join in creative dramatics and storytelling.

Common Core State Standards in ELA (Reading Literature)

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

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

RL.1.1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL.1.3. Describe characters in a story using key details.

RL.1.4. Identify words or phrases in a story that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

RL.1.7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe characters, setting, or events.

SL.1.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults.

SL.1.2. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud.

SL.1.4. Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant detail, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

College and Career Ready Students in Reading

Demonstrate independence.

Build strong content knowledge.

Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.

Comprehend as well as critique.

Value evidence.

ICON KEY:

 = Notes specific *Readers Workshop* Curriculum strategies addressed

 = Indicates note or reminder for teacher

 = Embedded assessment points in the lesson

COLOR CODING for ARTS AND LITERACY INFUSED PROCESSES:

GENERATE IDEAS	CONSTRUCT MEANING	SELF-REFLECT
Gather Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From WHAT you know • From WHO you know • Brainstorm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create drafts • Organize ideas • Make a choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with self • Check in with others • Refine work

Pre-Teach

Introduce the concept of character as the people or animals that the story is about. Explain that we can figure out why characters act the way they do when we use our own memories of the way things feel, smell, look, taste, and sound. Review five senses.

Lesson Steps Outline

Day One

1. Lead a warm-up. Instruct class to walk in neutral. Prompt class to adjust how they move to fit a specific condition.

2. Divide class in half: audience/performers. Lead each group to use personal memories to create characters in action and reflect.

 Criteria-based teacher checklist, peer assessment and reflection: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific character behavior.

3. Read the story “Dragons and Giants” from *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel. Lead students in mining the text for specific actions.

4. Guide reflection.

 Criteria-based full group reflection: Describes expressive actions with verbs.

Day Two

1. Leads a warm-up. Instruct students to show a specific character feeling as students walk through the space.

Criteria-based process assessment: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific emotion or state of being for a character.

2. Lead students through a character development visualization exercise.

3. Guide students as they act out their visualization.

4. Lead students through a second visualization exercise to develop a character.

5. Guide students as they act out their visualization.

6. Re-read the story "Dragons and Giants" as preparation for students to develop specific characters. Stop at pre-selected spots and guide students to act out what is being read using their memories from the visualization exercises.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific emotion or state of being for a character.

7. Guide reflection.

Criteria-based full group reflection: Reflects on how background knowledge helps one connect to characters' feelings.

Day Three

1. Lead a warm-up. Guide students as they pretend to eat different foods to connect characters to their actions.

2. Divide class in half. Lead each group through a sense memory exercise that focuses on how an actor develops a character's reactions to taste and smell. Guide reflection.

Criteria-based teacher checklist, group reflection: Uses pantomime, facial expressions, and vocal expressions to reflect the sensory attributes of reacting to a specific object (food).

3. Read the story "Cookies" from *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel. Guide students to act out what is being read using their memories from the visualization exercise.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Uses physical and vocal choices to communicate the specific actions and emotions of a character in a story.

4. Lead a reflection on the story "Cookies." Ask each student to recall a specific action a character did in the story. Then guide students to generate ideas and act out new actions they would do in the same situation.

Criteria-based teacher checklist, self and group reflection: Notes character action words mined from story.

5. Guide reflection.

Criteria-based full group reflection: Reflects on how using background knowledge helps them understand characters' actions.

LESSON STEPS

Day One

1. Lead a warm-up. Instruct class to walk in neutral. Prompt class to adjust how they move to fit a specific condition.

📖 Activating background knowledge

📖 Although this lesson references specific stories, these strategies can be applied to any story that is used in the classroom.

📖 Pre-determine how the room will be set-up for students to move through space – desks moved to the side or students moving among the desks.

- *Walk in neutral through our space. No voices and no touching anyone else.*
- *Now, walk as if you were walking through mud; walking across hot sand; walking through rain puddles; walking through a thick jungle; walking through snow; walking through leaves, etc.*
- *Have a seat right where you are. Let's reflect on what we just did. How did you know what to do when I asked you to pretend to walk through mud? Right, you may remember doing it yourself.*
- *Those memories are what make up our background knowledge — this knowledge is very important for actors because it helps create characters. It is also very important to us as readers because, as we read, we are always asking ourselves questions, such as, "Have I done that before? Have I ever felt that way?"*

2. Divide class in half: audience/performers. Lead each group to use personal memories to create characters in action and reflect.

📖 Mini-lesson, background knowledge, creating mental images

📖 Pre-determine how the room will be set-up for students to be actors and audience.

- *Now, we are going to look at how we can use actions to communicate the memories we have stored away in our brains. Let's divide the class so half. This half will perform first and the other half will be the audience, then we'll switch.*
- *Performers, walk around the performance area in neutral. You are constructing meaning as an artist when you brainstorm for ideas and make a choice.*
- *Now, keep moving but it's starting to get hot. Show us that it's getting hotter. Even hotter! It's like a desert! I see you are exaggerating and making some of your first ideas even bigger. Actors have a seat.*
- *Now, audience, let's reflect on what we saw. What actions did you notice the actors using to communicate that it was hot? Don't show me, give me a verb — an action.*
- *Actors, move around the performance area in neutral. Show us that the floor is sticky. Even stickier! Exaggerate your physical choices! Actors have a seat.*
- *Let's reflect. What actions did the actors use to communicate the floor was sticky?*

- *Let's switch groups. Actors move around the performance area in neutral. Keep moving but it's starting to get cold. Show us that it's getting colder. It's freezing cold! Exaggerate to make your first ideas even bigger. Actors have a seat.*
- *Now, audience, let's reflect on what we saw – what actions did you notice the actors using to communicate that it was cold? Don't show me, give me a verb – an action.*
- *Actors, move around the performance area in neutral. Show us that the floor is slippery, while staying on two feet. Even more slippery! Exaggerate your physical choices! Actors have a seat.*
- *Let's reflect. What actions did the actors use to communicate the floor was slippery?*

Criteria-based teacher checklist, peer assessment and reflection: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific character behavior.

3. Read the story "Dragons and Giants" from *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel. Lead students in mining the text for specific actions.

 Record verbs on a reading chart.

- *As I read this story, think about the character actions you might do if you were in the same situation as Frog and Toad.*
- *After we read the story, we will create a reading chart of verbs to note how the characters would act in different parts of the story using any clues we heard in the story.*

4. Guide reflection.

 Full-group reflection.

- *Let's think back to when we were pretending it was hot and cold. What were some actions that we saw? Use just one word – a verb – to describe each action.*

Criteria-based reflection: Describes expressive actions with verbs.

Day Two

1. Leads a warm-up. Instruct students to show a specific character feeling as students walk through the space.

- *Walk in neutral. When I say "Go!" walk like you are very tired; like you are so excited to get to where you are going; like you are so bored. Freeze.*
- *When I call out a new feeling, did you know that you immediately **generate ideas** on what to do based on your own memories? You **construct meaning** when you put those memories into movement.*
- *Now, move like you are really scared; like you are angry; like you are hungry, etc.*

Criteria-based process assessment: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific emotion or state of being for a character.

2. Lead students through a character development visualization exercise.

 Mini-lesson, background knowledge, creating mental images, turn and talk

 Don't let the visualization exercise go on too long. The exercise may be challenging for some students to make a series of mental pictures for an extended time.

- *Sit down and close your eyes. Pretend that you are the star in a movie that you are making inside your head.*
 - *Imagine that you see a giant mountain. It is very rocky and covered with trees. See those trees. What kind are they? You are now starting to climb the mountain. There are lots of rocks and bushes. It's very hard to climb but you are doing it! Keep climbing.*
 - *What's the weather like? Is it hot? Is it cold? Is it rainy? Maybe it's misty — it's your movie; make the weather whatever you want it to be. Keep climbing.*
 - *You are getting tired. What happens to your body when you are really working hard? How do your legs feel? How is your breathing?*
 - *You are still climbing over those rocks and through those trees. You see the top! There it is! You made it!*
 - *Let's reflect. Turn to your neighbor and tell him/her what your mountain looked like. What kind of trees did it have? How was the weather? What feelings did you have as you climbed? What happened to you when you got tired?*
-

3. Guide students as they act out their visualization.

- *Let's stand up. Move through the room and act out what you just imagined. Show how you climbed that mountain. Show how tired you felt. Let me see you climb over those rocks and through the trees.*
-

4. Lead students through a second visualization exercise to develop a character.

- *Now, let's imagine you are on your mountain again, and you see a very dark cave. Look into that cave. It's cool. . . .dark. . . .kind of spooky. What's it smell like? Give the cave a smell.*
 - *Now, make yourself brave and walk into the cave. Do you walk carefully? Do you creep in? Jump in? How do you feel? It's so dark.*
 - *Suddenly, you feel something brush your face! What is it? Is it a spider web? You walk a little further in. How's your heart beating? How's your breathing?*
 - *Suddenly, you hear a "Hiss!" A giant snake is in front of you! What do you do? Hurry, do something!*
 - *Let's reflect. Turn to your neighbor and tell him/her what happened in your cave. What did you do about that snake?*
-

5. Guide students as they act out their visualization.

- *Let's stand up. Move through the room and act out what you just imagined. Show me how you walked into that dark, spooky cave. Show me how you felt as you got deeper into the cave. Show me what happened with the snake.*
-

6. Re-read the story "Dragons and Giants" as preparation for students to develop specific characters. Stop at pre-selected spots and guide students to act out what is being read using their memories from the visualization exercises.

 Re-read, re-tell, re-enact

- *As I read "Dragons and Giants" again, I want you to think about your feelings and actions when you pretended to be climbing a mountain and walking into a cave.*
- *When I get to the part where Frog and Toad start climbing the mountain, we will **construct meaning** by acting out the story as we read it. Then we'll act out more parts of the story.*
- *..."Frog and Toad went outside." Let's all stand up. Show me going outside. "Frog went leaping over rocks, and Toad came puffing up behind him."*
- *Now, show me how you climbed that mountain. Can you "puff" as you climb?*
- *..."They came to a dark cave." Show me how you walked into that cave.*
- *..."A big snake came out of the cave." Show me how you felt when you saw the snake!*
- *..."He jumped into the bed, pulling the covers up over his head." Are Frog and Toad brave at the end of the story? What are they feeling? Yes, they are very scared. Show me that you're scared and pulling the covers over your head.*

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific emotion or state of being for a character.

4. Guide reflection.

 Full-group reflection.

- *In what ways did your creating the mountain in your mind and pretending to climb it help you in understanding what Frog and Toad were feeling in the story?*

Criteria-based reflection: Reflects on how background knowledge helps one connect to characters' feelings.

Day Three

1. Lead a warm-up. Guide students as they pretend to eat different foods to connect characters to their actions.

- *Let's stand/sit in a circle. Think back to a time when you ate noodles. It could have been in soup, or in a stir-fry, or it might have been spaghetti. When I say, "Eat!" pretend you are eating noodles. "Eat!"*
- *Let's try apples. When I say, "Eat!" pretend you are eating an apple. "Eat!" Is it the whole apple or slices? Sweet or tart?*
- *Let's try an ice cream cone. When I say, "Eat!" pretend you are eating an ice cream cone. "Eat!" What flavor is it? Is it dripping or hard? What kind of cone?*
- *Now, let's try bubble gum. When I say, "Eat!" pretend you are eating bubble gum. "Eat!" Is it a big piece? Can you blow a bubble? Is it hard to chew?*

2. Divide class in half: audience/performers. Lead each group through a sense memory exercise that focuses on how an actor develops a character's reactions to taste and smell.

Guide reflection.

 Mini-lesson, background knowledge, sharing

- *We are going to explore our "sense memories". Actors use this term to describe the different memories we have that are connected to our five senses: smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch.*
- *Let's have the first group, close your eyes. I want you to **generate ideas** and think back to a time when you ate a cookie. Pretend to hold that cookie in your hand. It is the most delicious cookie you have ever had! Smell it. It smells so good! When I say, "Eat!" eat that amazing cookie. I want you to **construct meaning** and show us with your face and body just how yummy that cookie is! "Eat!"*
- *Use your voice and say, "This is the best cookie I have ever eaten!" Let us know how yummy that cookie is through your voice.*
- *Audience, let's reflect on what we saw. What actions or expressions did you see that really made you believe that someone was eating a delicious cookie? What sounds did you hear? How did their voices let us know that the cookies were yummy?*
- *Let's do the same process with the other group.*

Criteria-based teacher checklist, group reflection: Uses pantomime, facial expressions, and vocal expressions to reflect the sensory attributes of reacting to a specific object (food).

3. Read the story “Cookies” from *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel. Guide students to act out what is being read using their memories from the visualization exercise.

- *As I read this story, I want you to think back to what you showed us when you pretended to eat that delicious cookie. You will be **constructing meaning** using your background knowledge. We will do some acting while we read.*
- *...“These cookies smell very good,” said Toad.” Where you are sitting, show me how good those cookies smell.*
- *...“Frog ate one of the cookies.” Show that you are eating the most delicious cookie ever.*
- *Now, we will all read the line, “These are the best cookies I have ever eaten.” Use your voice to show how yummy these cookies are. Act it out while you are talking.*
- *When I point to you say the same line by yourself, “These are the best cookies I have ever eaten.” Use your voice and body to show how much you like these cookies.*

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Uses physical and vocal choices to communicate the specific actions and emotions of a character in a story.

4. Lead a **reflection on the story “Cookies.” Ask each student to recall a specific action a character did in the story. Then guide students to generate ideas and act out new actions they would do in the same situation.**

 Re-tell, predicting

 Record the action and students’ name for each response.

- *Let’s reflect. I want you to share with the class one action Frog or Toad did during the story. What do you remember one of them doing?*
- *Let’s reflect on the story in a different way. Let’s generate ideas for what you would do if you couldn’t stop eating a delicious cookie. Think of something different than what Frog and Toad did. Turn to your neighbor and share a strategy to stop yourself from eating too many cookies. Who would like to share?*
- *Let’s act some of them out. There was the idea to stick all the cookies into the garbage! Let’s act that out! Let me see everyone eating your delicious cookie. Now, show that you have had enough and need to stop. Show what it looks like to put them into the garbage.*

Criteria-based teacher checklist, self and group reflection: Notes character action words mined from story.

4. Guide reflection.

 Full-group reflection.

- *How easy (or challenging) was it for you to think up different strategies for getting rid of those cookies? How were you able to put yourself “in the shoes” of Frog and Toad to come up with new solutions to your problem?*

Criteria-based reflection: Reflects on how using background knowledge helps them understand characters’ actions.

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Reading Infusion

First Grade: *Applying Background Knowledge to a Character*

CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines	THEATER		THEATER	THEATER/ READING		READING	Total 6
Concept	Body/Action	Body/Emotion	Sense Memory	Background Knowledge		Character Actions	
Criteria	Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific character behavior.	Uses posture and movement choices to communicate a specific emotion or state of being for a character.	Uses pantomime, facial expressions and vocal expressions to reflect the sensory attributes of reacting to a specific object.	Uses physical and vocal choices to communicate the specific actions and emotions of a character in a story.		Notes character action words mined from story.	
Student Name				BODY	VOICE		
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							
13.							
14.							
15.							
16.							
17.							
18.							
19.							
20.							
21.							
22.							
23.							
24.							
25.							
26.							
27.							
28.							
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 theater and reading?

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

THEATER AND READING LESSON: *Applying Background Knowledge to a Character*

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an **Arts and Reading** lesson. We learned that actors use their personal memories when they act out characters. We discussed that when we read stories we use our personal memories as background knowledge to connect to the characters.

- We pretended to walk through different conditions, such as: hot, cold, a sticky floor, a slippery floor.
- We closed our eyes and visualized climbing a mountain and being in a dark cave. We acted out what we pictured in our minds.
- We remembered what it was like eating a really delicious cookie and acted it out using pantomime and our voices.
- We read two "Frog and Toad" stories and, using our background knowledge and what we read in the story, we acted out parts while we read.

At home, you could act out parts of your favorite stories as you read them aloud.

Enduring Understanding

Using sense memory and visualization can strengthen the connection between background knowledge and what is read about characters in a story.