# ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN

Theater and Writing Infused Lesson

Lesson Two: Narrative Dialogue

Author: Rachel Atkins Grade Level: Eighth

Enduring Understanding

Actors and writers can develop a narrative through dialogue spoken during a sequence of events from

beginning to middle to end.

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

In this theater and writing lesson, students add character dialogue to a narrative they’ve created with a

small group based on a study of immigration or another unit of study. They collaborate with their

groups to decide what their characters are saying in three tableaux (frozen stage pictures). Students

perform their tableaux while speaking their dialogue with vocal expression. They revise and rewrite

their own version of the narrative, adding dialogue to develop the characters and events.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Creates and speaks dialogue for one character with corresponding emotion.

Criteria: Says character lines with vocal expression (pitch, volume, speed, or quality) while frozen

in tableaux.

Target: Collaborates with others (in tableaux).

Criteria: Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

Target: Writes dialogue that develops all characters in a three-part narrative.

Criteria: Creates and uses character lines to show the setting or situation within a sequence

of events.

Target: Develops narrative writing through feedback and planning.

Criteria: Revises and edits writing to add information through dialogue.

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

Book-It Repertory Theatre

Seattle Children’s Theatre

Tacoma, WA

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts

Materials

Tableau Checklist; Tips for Dialogue;

Arts Impact sketchbooks/writing journal;

Lesson 1 tableaux quick sketches;

Narrative prompt content materials

(Reading, Social Studies, etc.); SelfAssessment

Worksheets and pencils;

Class Assessment Worksheet

Vocabulary

Arts Infused:

Action

Audience

Audience

Beginning

Character

Collaboration

Compromise

Conclusion

Cue

Emotion

End

Event

Line (dialogue)

Meaning

Middle

Problem

Relationship

Script

Sequence

Setting

Solution

continued

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, plot, dialogue

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

continued

ARTS IMPACT THEATER AND WRITING INFUSION – Eighth Grade Lesson Two: Narrative Dialogue

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Writing:

Description

Details

Edit

Narrative

Revise

Rewrite

Arts:

Body Shape

Cheating Out

Depth

Downstage

Eye Contact

Facial Expression

Levels

Physical Contact

Pitch (high, low)

Speed (fast, slow)

Statue

Tableau

Upstage

Vocal Expression

Vocal Quality (rough,

squeaky, etc.)

Volume (loud, soft)

Common Core State Standards in ELA

For a full description of CCSS Standards by grade

level see:

http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/ELAstandar

ds/

W.8.3.A Engage and orient the reader by

establishing a context and point of view and

introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize

an event sequence that unfolds naturally and

logically.

W.8.3.B Use narrative techniques, such as

dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to

develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

W.8.3.D Use precise words and phrases, relevant

descriptive details, and sensory language to

capture the action and convey experiences and

events.

W.8.3.E Provide a conclusion that follows from

and reflects on the narrated experiences or

events.

W.8.5 With some guidance and support from

peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing

as needed by planning, revising, editing,

rewriting.

W.8.9 Draw evidence from literary or

informational texts to support analysis, reflection,

and research.

SL.8.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and

tasks.

College and Career Readiness Standards in

Speaking and Listening

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.

Social Studies GLEs (if using SS focus)

http:www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/pubdocs/Socia

lStudiesStandards.pdf

1.3.1 Analyzes how the United States has

interacted with other countries in the past or

present.

3.2.2 Understands cultural diffusion in the United

States from the past or in the present.

3.2.3 Understands and analyzes migration as a

catalyst on the growth of the United States in the

past or present.

4.1.2 Understands how the following themes and

developments help to define eras in U.S. history:

Development and struggles in the West,

industrialization, immigration, and urbanization

(1870—1900).

4.2 Understands and analyzes causal factors that

have shaped major events in history.

4.4.1 Analyzes how a historical event in United

States history helps us to understand a current

issue.

5.4 Creates a product that uses social studies

content to support a thesis and presents the

product in an appropriate manner to a meaningful

audience.

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Pre-Teach

Select narrative prompt materials, such as:

• Historical research within a specific grade-level Social Studies unit

• Fiction or nonfiction reading

• Presentation of other prompts (photos, illustrations, objects, film, etc.)

This lesson is one of a series of three Theater and Writing Infused lessons.

Teach Lesson 1, “Narrative Tableaux”, before this lesson.

Lesson Steps Outline

1. Introduce/review content area narrative prompt.

2. Direct students in a warm-up. Put students into original tableau groups from

Lesson 1 in their own space, in a large circle around the perimeter of the room.

Display or write the Tableau Checklist on the board. Guide groups to review

Lesson 1 tableaux.

3. Facilitate groups creating dialogue for their narratives independently. Display

or write the Tips for Dialogue from the lesson on the board.

Criteria-based process assessment: Creates and uses character lines to show

the setting or situation within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to

others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

4. Guide students to use vocal expression while saying their dialogue.

Criteria-based process assessment: Says character lines with vocal expression

(pitch, volume, speed, or quality) while frozen in tableaux.

5. Direct students to practice staying frozen in each tableau while saying their

lines with vocal expression.

Criteria-based process assessment: Says character lines with vocal expression

(pitch, volume, speed, or quality) while frozen in tableaux.

ICON KEY:

3 = Indicates note or reminder for teacher

= Embedded assessment points in the lesson

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6. Facilitate as groups perform their dialogue tableaux for the class. Ask

audience to explain what they see, or to make suggestions for revisions by

giving evidence.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and peer assessment: Says character lines

with vocal expression (pitch, volume, speed, or quality) while frozen in tableaux.

7. Guide students to complete their Self-Assessment Worksheets independently.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and self-assessment: Communicates ideas to

others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

8. POST THEATER LESSON WRITING. Instruct students to edit and revise the

narrative they wrote after Lesson 1 by adding dialogue.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Creates and uses character lines to show the

setting or situation within a sequence of events. Revises and edits writing to add

information and details through dialogue.

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LESSON STEPS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Introduce/review content area narrative prompt.

• In our first lesson, you collaborated with a group to develop a narrative about immigration (or

another topic) and then created a series of three tableaux that showed the beginning, middle,

and end of its sequence of events.

• Today, we’re building on these stories through theatre and writing. You’ll create dialogue for

the characters in your narrative, and then add that dialogue to your tableaux, using

vocal expression.

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2. Direct students in a warm-up. Put students into original tableau groups from Lesson 1 in

their own space, in a large circle around the perimeter of the room. Display or write the

Tableau Checklist on the board. Guide groups to review Lesson 1 tableaux.

• Let’s warm up by reviewing your tableaux from the first lesson. Review your quick sketches in

your journals for any revisions you need to make for people who are absent, etc. Then I’ll cue

you in an all-play rehearsal to do all three tableaux, with everyone working at the same time.

• Beginning Tableau into position, 1-2-3-Freeze. Middle Tableau, into position, 1-2-3-Freeze. End

Tableau, into position, 1-2-3-Freeze. Actors relax.

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3. Facilitate groups creating dialogue for their narratives independently. Display or write

the Tips for Dialogue from the lesson on the board.

• Add dialogue to each of your tableaux. The dialogue should add essential details and

information to develop the narrative.

• Each character says one line of dialogue in each tableau. Because each character gets only one

line, it must be the most important thing that character would be saying (or thinking) in each

part of the sequence.

• Let’s use the model tableau you made of the immigrants first arriving as an example. What are

some possible lines of dialogue those characters might say? How can we add more details and

information to that line?

• Use the Tips for Dialogue to create detailed lines that add more information. You can also use

ideas from your Lesson 1 writing, as well as our study materials. Your goal is to help your

audience better understand your narrative through the lines you add.

• Your group will collaborate to decide on the dialogue, but everyone should write it down in their

journals. This will help you in your writing later, and as we keep building these tableaux.

• Decide what each character will say, and in which order the lines will be spoken.

• I’ll be asking you to reflect on how you collaborated at the end of the lesson again. Remember

that collaboration means:

1. You communicate your own ideas and listen to other people’s ideas.

2. You compromise with one another to come up with your dialogue.

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3. Incorporate each other’s input and feedback as you develop your dialogue.

Criteria-based process assessment: Creates and uses character lines to show the setting or situation

within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates

input/feedback.

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4. Guide students to use vocal expression while saying their dialogue.

• Once you’ve created your script, practice saying your lines with vocal expression.

Vocal expression means we change our voices to match the meaning and emotion of the line

and the character.

• Let’s practice with one of our model lines. Say it in a scared voice—go! Try an excited voice—

go! Notice how our voices change.

• Decide how your character feels when you say each of your lines, and write down the emotion

next to your line in your journal. When you say the line, change your pitch, volume, speed, and

vocal quality to match your character’s emotion or meaning.

Pitch—high or low

Volume—loud or soft

Speed—fast or slow

Quality—descriptive words, such as: whispery, rough, squeaky, powerful, etc.

• Project your voice: speak loudly and clearly enough so the audience can hear and

understand you.

Criteria-based process assessment: Says character lines with vocal expression (pitch, volume, speed,

or quality) while frozen in tableaux.

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5. Direct students to practice staying frozen in each tableau while saying their lines with

vocal expression.

• Now practice saying your lines while you’re in your tableaux. Stay frozen while you speak.

Rehearse so that you can go through the script of each tableau.

• You should be able to remember your lines and vocal expression, as well as your cues (the lines

that come before yours).

Criteria-based process assessment: Says character lines with vocal expression (pitch, volume, speed,

or quality) while frozen in tableaux.

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6. Facilitate as groups perform their dialogue tableaux for the class. Ask audience to

explain what they see, or to make suggestions for revisions by giving evidence.

• Let’s do a final rehearsal, an all-play. I’ll give you a 1-2-3-Freeze and everyone will make their

beginning tableaux at the same time. When I say “Go,” say your lines. After the last actor has

spoken, stay frozen. When all groups are frozen and silent, I’ll know you’re ready for me to cue

you to your next tableau. Beginning tableau into position, 1-2-3-Freeze! Go! Middle tableau into

position, 1-2-3-Freeze! Go! End Tableau, getting into position, 1-2-3-Freeze. Go! Actors relax.

• Now we’ll go around the circle and each group will show its tableau series with dialogue one at

a time. I’ll prompt you the same way. If everyone stays where they are in the circle, you should

ARTS IMPACT THEATER AND WRITING INFUSION – Eighth Grade Lesson Two: Narrative Dialogue

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have a reasonably good view of the other groups. Project your voices so everyone can hear

your lines.

• Audience, notice what the actors are doing, and listen to the lines for more information and

details. What characters do you see? What is happening in the sequence of events? What more

do you learn about the narrative from the lines?

• After each group shows, I’ll take one or two pieces of feedback.

• Give evidence about how you know what you see. Use the Tableau Checklist or the Tips for

Dialogue to give feedback. For example, “I could tell that these characters were being chased

because their bodies were in running positions downstage, and the other character was upstage

with her arms reaching toward them like she was trying to catch them.” or “The lines helped

me understand that they’re a family because they called their parents Mom and Dad.”

• Because we’ll continue working on these narratives, I’ll also ask for suggestions for revisions to

their dialogue. Please offer a specific idea for improvement. For example, “I didn’t know who

that character was—it would help if the other characters called him by his name or title.” Or “I

didn’t understand where they were—maybe she could say, “It sure is windy on top of Mount

Everest” instead of “It sure is windy up here!”

• Actors, have your journals handy so can take notes on ideas for revisions.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and peer assessment: Says character lines with vocal expression

(pitch, volume, speed, or quality) while frozen in tableaux.

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7. Guide students to complete their Self-Assessment Worksheets independently.

• When you fill out your worksheets, you will assess your own work on speaking and writing your

dialogue. Then you can analyze and assess your collaboration. After you have edited and

revised your dialogue in our next lesson step, you can assess your work on that as well.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and

incorporates input/feedback.

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POST THEATER LESSON WRITING

8. Instruct students to edit and revise the narrative they wrote after Lesson 1 by

adding dialogue.

• You’ll edit and revise your Lesson 1 writing by incorporating dialogue. You can use the actual

lines from your tableaux, or you can write your own version. You can also use the notes you

received from the audience. Your narrative should still introduce the characters and clearly

explain the sequence of events from beginning to middle to end.

• This is your own version of the narrative, so it doesn’t need to be the same as anyone else’s.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Creates and uses character lines to show the setting or situation

within a sequence of events. Revises and edits writing to add information and details through dialogue.

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Elements of Tableau Checklist

• Statue: Individual facial expression and body shape/gesture

o Use whole face and body

o Show character

o Show action (body)

o Show emotion (face)

• Levels and depth

o Low/medium/high, left/right/center, downstage, upstage, near/far

o Three dimensional use of stage or playing space

• Character and spatial relationships/connections

o Eye contact

o Physical contact using positive or negative space (touching or

not touching)

o Proximity or distance

• Open to the audience (cheat out)

o Audience awareness

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Tips for Dialogue

• Address other characters by names and/or titles to help the audience know who the

characters are and the relationships they have to one another.

o Examples: Mom, Doctor, Officer, etc.

• Use nouns—be specific!

o Example: instead of “Can I have that?” try saying, “Mom, could you please pass

the maple syrup?” What more do you learn about the characters, setting, and

situation from the second line that you don’t learn from the first?

• Each line should add new, relevant information and details.

o Example: if one character says, “The volcano is erupting!” then the next

character should add something more: “The lava has almost reached

our house!”

o Lines like “Oh no!” or “Yeah!” are throwaway lines—they don’t tell the audience

anything new.

o Avoid repetition or simple agreement. If one character says, “I hope it doesn’t

rain,” the next shouldn’t just say, “Me too” or “Yeah, it would be bad if it rained.”

Add more, like: “The rain would melt our ice sculptures.” or “I’m terrified of

thunder and lightning.”

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ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Eighth Grade Lesson Two: Narrative Dialogue

3 Teachers may choose to use or adapt the following self-assessment tool.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines THEATER/WRITING WRITING WRITING Total

Concept Dialogue Narrative Revision 3

Criteria

Student Name

Says character lines with

vocal expression (pitch,

volume, speed or quality)

while frozen in tableaux.

Creates and uses character

lines to show the setting or

situation within a sequence of

events.

Revises, edits

writing to add

information

through dialogue.

Disciplines THEATER

21st Century Skills

Total

3

Concept Collaboration

Criteria

Student Name

Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and

incorporates input/feedback

Shares ideas Compromises Uses input

COLLABORATION SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Put a check next to each of the ways you collaborated with your group to create your tableau:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I communicated my ideas to the other members of my group.

An example of an idea I contributed to our tableau is:

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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I compromised with the other members of my group.

I changed an idea I had to go along with the group by

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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I incorporated feedback or input from other members of my group.

I used someone else’s idea or suggestion to adjust something I did by

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ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Eighth Grade Lesson Two: Narrative Dialogue

CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines THEATER/WRITING THEATER

21st Century Skills

WRITING WRITING Total

6

Concept Dialogue Collaboration Narrative Revision

Criteria

Student Name

Says character lines

with vocal expression

(pitch, volume, speed or

quality) while frozen in

tableaux.

Communicates ideas to others;

makes compromises; and

incorporates input/feedback.

Creates and uses

character lines to

show the setting

or situation within

a sequence of

events.

Revises, edits

writing to add

information

through

dialogue. Shares

ideas Compromises Uses

input

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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 writing?

Teacher: Date:

ARTS IMPACT THEATER AND WRITING INFUSION – Eighth Grade Lesson Two: Narrative Dialogue

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ARTS IMPACT FAMILY LETTER

ARTS AND WRITING LESSON: Narrative Dialogue

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in a Theater and Writing lesson. We added dialogue to a narrative

series of events.

• We explored characters and events from our study of immigration (or other unit of study).

• We collaborated with a group to develop and build on frozen stage pictures called tableaux to

express our ideas.

• We added character dialogue to the series of three tableaux and spoke with vocal expression as

our characters.

• We revised and rewrote our own versions of our narrative by adding character dialogue.

At home, you could help your child practice speaking dialogue with vocal expression by reading their

script aloud with them. You can read the other characters’ lines out loud while your child says his/her

own lines. Notice the vocal qualities you both use to put emotion into your voices.

Enduring Understanding

Actors and writers can develop a narrative through dialogue spoken during a sequence of events from

beginning to middle to end.