

Stage and Stage Directions: 5 Days

Day 1 - stage directions/history

Enduring Understanding: *Every element of a play (set, character, props, etc) are there to help tell the story*

Essential Question: *Why are stage directions defined the way they are?*

Supplies: *images of raked stages*

Vocab: *Upstage, Downstage, Stage Right, Stage Left, Center Stage, Raked Stage, House, Groundling*

- 1) Stage Direction Mini-Lesson
 - a) Shakespeare & his Old Globe
 - b) Why we call it a Raked Stage, and how we get the stage directions
- 2) Stage Directions Simon Says
 - a) Only move if I say "cross stage right," not if I say "stage right"
 - b) Once students are Groundlings (aka. "out"), they provide stage directions as well
- 3) Ask students to change the location of their stage. What stage directions are they in if the audience is in a new location?
 - a) Why is it important to establish one set of vocabulary for stage directions?
 - b) Any actors in other countries? Any idea what they call the stage directions in other places?

Day 2 - levels, windows, cheating out

Enduring Understanding: *Every element of a play (set, character, props, etc) are there to help tell the story*

Essential Question: *What strategies do we use to make elements of the stage visible?*

Supplies: *4 cones or spacers*

Vocab: *levels, windows, cheating out*

- 1) Warm-up activity: Shrinking Family Portraits (6-8 per group)
 - a) Ask them to make a family portrait of various "types" of family (choose family members (kid, grampa, etc) sad, happy, angry, confused, nervous, surprised)
 - b) In the portrait, we need to be able to see every single person's face from the audience
 - c) Shrink the size of the portrait multiple times, so they have to discover ways to create stage pictures through the changing sizes
- 2) Discussion/Vocab
 - a) Questions: what happened when the area of the portrait changed?
 - i) How do we solve problems such as putting a tall person in front of a short person? Or two equal heighted people next to one another?
 - ii) Why is this relevant in our drama class?
 - iii) What is revealed when we put Grampa in the back, for example?
 - b) Define: levels, windows, cheating out
- 3) Freeze & Justify Game
 - a) Students walk around the space in a character. (Pirates, spies, adventurers, hikers, sports players, etc...) On the words "Stage Picture," everyone has to

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freeze in a pose that can be totally seen from the audience (with levels, windows, and cheating out).

- b) Teacher side coaches them if necessary to be visible. Ask them to justify what their character is doing. Audience group can add comments (I can't see you!) if needed
- 4) Reflections - what images were the most interesting? Why? What could we learn from these images even with characters that were more upstage/downstage? Character relationships, what drama, what story begins to be revealed?

Day 3 - stage vocab, stage pictures

Enduring Understanding: *Every element of a play (set, character, props, etc) are there to help tell the story*

Essential Question: *What strategies do we use to tell the story?*

How does a tableau tell a story through one single image?

Supplies: *hand outs of the cliché tableaux they're going to make*

Vocab: *review stage directions, tableau(x), cliché*

- 1) Warm-up: Attendance & Stage Directions 4 Corners (10 - ONE ROUND)
- 2) Discussion: define tableaux and use in stage directions (10)
 - a) Incorporate ways to use the space - downstage/center is stronger than upstage/sides, cheated out totally is stronger than showing us their backs
 - b) Sample tableau: Cat Got Your Tongue?
- 3) Create Tableaux - (15)
 - a) 3-5 images
 - b) Use 2+ levels: high, medium, and low
 - c) Use the space! 2+ quadrants (at least one corner)
 - d) One entrance or exit
- 4) Present Tableaux (15)
 - a) Which phrase is it? What is the story of this cliché?
 - b) How does the way we use the space help us figure out the phrase we're looking for?

Day 4 - Continue Stage Vocab and Stage Pictures

Enduring Understanding: *Every element of a play (set, character, props, etc) are there to help tell the story*

Essential Question: *What strategies do we use to tell the story?*

How does a tableau tell a story through one single image?

Supplies: *list of the clichés (for student reference)*

Vocab: *review stage directions, tableau(x)*

- 1) Warm-up: Attendance and 1 round of Stage Directions 4 Corners (10)
- 2) Finish Cliché Tableaux (40)

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Day 5 - Stage Picture Puzzle

Enduring Understanding: *Every element of a play (set, character, props, etc) are there to help tell the story*

Essential Question: *What strategies do we use to tell the story?*

How does a tableau tell a story through one single image?

How can we use sources from other cultures and art forms to inspire stories?

Supplies: *artwork printouts or powerpoint, handouts of the instructions of stage directions and levels, etc*

- 1) Attendance Question: if you were onstage right now, what stage direction would you be in?
- 2) Main Activity: creating an art museum
 - a) Explain that we will be creating an art museum together of international art.
 - b) Group students. Students
 - c) With each group, give them their image description. Ask kids to, one at a time, make their tableau in the stage direction listed on the page
 - d) After student in the group have created their image, present the artwork sample
 - i) What's the story of the image that we see?
 - ii) Compare the final images to the artwork. How do we fix elements that are incorrect?
- 3) Theatre Show video of Sunday in the Park with George
- 4) Wrap-up game: Museum

Assessment:

- 1) Can students follow the directions correctly, regarding stage directions and levels, to create the image?
- 2) Can students accurately direct other students to create the images?

Further modifications:

- 1) Have students find images from their home cultures and write out the stage directions to recreate the image. Give these directions to other students and see them recreate the images themselves.
- 2) Use tableaux from the museums or cliches to begin lessons on storytelling, movement, characterization, plot, etc.

Link to other subjects:

Art - students are creating living representations of fine art, discussion pointillism, and

Music - exposure to the music of Stephen Sondheim

Cultural - paintings come from Europe, India, Mexico, and Korea. (Open to any cultures represented by the students)