



# TOOLS OF SCENE WORK

By ANNA PORTER

Students are introduced to scene work performance through a simple, contentless scene unit. In this unit, performers will use exercises like "Show and Tell" to learn how to fill in the gaps of a story by creating scenarios and detailed characters with backgrounds.

Students will further fill in the gaps by exploring environmental and physical conflict as well as stage business. The lesson "Thou Shalts of Staging" will guide students through basic staging and performance technique.

## 1 - Introduction

Have students create a situation from a picture and examine the given clues to help fill in the gaps. Next, have students examine the clues in a contentless scene, then fill in the gaps to create their own scenario to perform.

## 2 - Show and Tell Characterization

Students will use "Show and Tell" to create a detailed background for their contentless scene character and improvise a personal interview with that character.

## 3 - Thou Shalts of Staging and Performance

Students will participate in a demonstration to explore the rules of staging and performance and why they are important. They will perform a Bad Idea/Good Idea skit for the class, to demonstrate their understanding of the concept.

## 4 - Environmental and Personal Conflict

Students will play a drama game and participate in an exercise to explore how conflict affects their active tactics. Students apply conflict to a scene for performance.

## 5 - Stage Business

Students will participate in an observation activity and play "What Are You Doing?" to explore how stage business affects performance. In this lesson, you will coach students through a scene with stage business, then they will apply stage business to their own performances.

## 6 - Contentless Scene - Preview Day

Students review what they have studied in this unit as well as how to give and use constructive feedback. Students will pair up with another scene group, then perform for each other. Students will use the Preview Worksheet to help guide and assess their previews and critiques.

## 7 - Final Performance

Students will perform and be evaluated on the contentless scene that they have prepared during the unit.

# Standards Connections

## National Core Arts Standards

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 6

TH:Cr1.1.6.c - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

### Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 6

TH:Pr4.1.6.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 7

TH:Cr1.1.7.c - Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives in a drama/theatre work.

### Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 7

TH:Pr4.1.7.b - Use various character objectives in a drama/theatre work.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - Grade 8

TH:Cr1.1.8.c - Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

### Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation - Grade 8

TH:Pr4.1.8.b - Use various character objectives and tactics in a drama/theatre work to overcome an obstacle.

### Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work - High School Proficient

TH:Cr1.1.HSI.c - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

### Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation - Grade HS Accomplished

TH:Pr5.1.HSII.a - Refine a range of acting skills to build a believable and sustainable drama/theatre performance.

### Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work - Grade 7

TH:Pr6.1.7.a - Participate in rehearsals for a drama/theatre work that will be shared with an audience.

### Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation - Grade 7

TH:Cr3.1.7.a - Demonstrate focus and concentration in the rehearsal process to analyze and refine choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

### Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work - Grade HS Proficient

TH:Pr6.1.HSI.a - Perform a scripted drama/theatre work for a specific audience.

### Refine new work through play, drama processes and theatre experiences using critical analysis and experimentation - Grade HS Advanced

TH:Cr3.1.HSIII.b - Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.

## Common Core

### Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

### Reading: Literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 - Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

### Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3 - Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

### Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

## California VAPA Standards (2019)

### 6.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

6.TH:Cr1.b - Explore a scripted or improvised character by imagining the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

### 6.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

6.TH:Pr4.a - Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

### 7.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

7.TH:Cr1.b - Envision and describe a scripted or improvised character's inner thoughts and objectives in a drama/theatre work.

### 7.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

7.TH:Pr4.b - Use various character objectives in a drama/theatre work.

### 8.TH:Pr4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work

### for presentation.

8.TH:Pr4.b - Use various character objectives and tactics in a drama/theatre work to overcome an obstacle.

### 8.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

8.TH:Cr1.b - Develop a scripted or improvised character by articulating the character's inner thoughts, objectives, and motivations in a drama/theatre work.

### Prof.TH:Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

Prof.TH:Cr1.b - Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

### Acc.TH:Pr5 Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Acc.TH:Pr5.a - Refine a range of acting skills to build a believable and sustainable drama/theatre performance.

### 7.TH:Pr6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

67TH:Pr6 - Create through improvisation a drama/theatre work that will be shared with an audience.

### 7.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

7.TH:Cr3.a - Demonstrate focus and concentration in the rehearsal process to analyze and refine choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

### Prof.TH:Pr6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Prof.TH:Pr6 - Perform a rehearsed, scripted short drama/theatre work for a specific audience.

### Adv.TH:Cr3 Refine and complete artistic work.

Adv.TH:Cr3.b - Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant in a drama/theatre work.

## Florida Sunshine State Standards

### Critical Thinking & Reflection

TH.912.C.1.2 - Create, refine, and sustain complex and believable characters for performance through the integration and application of artistic choices based on research, rehearsal, feedback, and refinement.

TH.912.C.1.5 - Make and defend conscious choices in the creation of a character that will fulfill anticipated audience response.

TH.912.C.2.5 - Analyze the effect of rehearsal sessions and/or strategies on refining skills and techniques by keeping a performance or rehearsal journal/log.

TH.912.C.2.8 - Improve a performance or project using various self-assessment tools, coaching, feedback, and/or constructive criticism.

### Organizational Structure

TH.912.O.1.1 - Research and analyze a dramatic text by breaking it down into its basic, structural elements to support development of a directorial concept, characterization, and design.

TH.912.O.2.6 - Deconstruct a play, using an established theory, to understand its dramatic structure.

### Skills, Techniques & Processes

TH.912.S.1.7 - Interpret dramatic texts, organize and conduct rehearsals, and justify directorial choices for formal and informal productions.

TH.912.S.2.3 - Demonstrate an understanding of a dramatic work by developing a character analysis for one or more of its

major characters and show how the analysis clarifies the character's physical and emotional dimensions.

TH.912.S.2.8 - Strengthen acting skills by engaging in theatre games and improvisations.

TH.912.S.3.3 - Develop acting skills and techniques in the rehearsal process.

## Georgia Performance Standards 2017 - Theatre Arts

### Grade 6 - Creating

TA6.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Identify artistic choices, utilize theatre vocabulary, and demonstrate non-verbal communication skills in the rehearsal process., b. Interpret a character's motivation by understanding the relationship between their background and their behavior., c. Identify the variety of relationships between characters., d. Identify, define, and classify character traits., e. Recognize and demonstrate the roles, responsibilities, and skills associated with collaborative performance., f. Use resources to identify and create technical elements of theatre.

TA6.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Identify the elements of a story., b. Identify the theme and structure of a play., c. Articulate creative ideas in oral and written forms., d. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script., e. Demonstrate the conventions of dialogue and stage directions.

### Grade 7 - Performing

TA7.PR.1 - Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments., a. Execute effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills in performance (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, physical movement)., b. Participate in a variety of acting exercises and techniques that can be applied in a rehearsal or theatre performance., c. Engage in various performance styles.

### Grade 8 - Creating

TA8.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Differentiate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a variety of characters., b. Compare the relationships and interactions between characters by analyzing character motivation (objectives, obstacles, strategy, action, stakes, outcome)., c. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., d. Connect theatre vocabulary to the application of theatre performance., e. Identify and demonstrate both ensemble and leadership skills in the rehearsal process., f. Evaluate the effectiveness of artistic and technical elements used in a theatre production., g. Design and create scenery, props, costumes, lighting, and sound., h. Assume different roles and responsibilities in the rehearsal process.

TA8.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Classify different points of view in a story., b. Identify, analyze, and articulate the structure of a script., c. Utilize improvisation techniques to generate script ideas., d. Use the dramatic writing process to generate a script.

### Grades 9-12 - ACTING LEVELS I-IV - Creating

TAHSA.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Use script analysis in the development and presentation of formal and informal theatre performances., b. Examine various theories of dramatic structure., c. Engage in and apply meaningful cultural, literary, and historical research to create acting choices or directorial concepts.

TAHSA.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Examine theatre practices regarding the development, structure, layout, and format of scripts., b. Use

improvisation, personal experiences, heritage, imagination, literature, and history to develop scripts., c. Perform formal and informal monologues and scenes based on published and original scripts.

### **Grades 9-12 - FUNDAMENTALS OF THEATRE LEVELS I-IV - Creating**

TAHSFT.CR.1 - Organize, design, and refine theatrical work., a. Recognize and/or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue or dramatic verse., b. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation., c. Recognize and interpret artistic choices in performance.

TAHSFT.CR.2 - Develop scripts through theatrical techniques., a. Differentiate between dramatic and traditional literary writing and utilize common steps of the playwriting process., b. Assess the need for script analysis, concept development, and directorial and technical concerns of a theatrical script., c. Construct and critique elements of dramatic structure, character, and dialogue., d. Create and perform scenes for audiences.

### **Grades 9-12 - THEATRE HISTORY AND LITERATURE I AND II - Performing**

TAHSTL.PR.1 - Analyze characters in theatre literature from the perspective of an actor/performer., a. Use performance (e.g. oration, improvisation, rehearsed monologues, scenes) to analyze a character's role and significance to the meaning of the play.

## **North Carolina Essential Standards**

### **Beginning High School Standards - Communication**

B.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization in a variety of theatre exercises.

B.C.2.2 - Interpret various selections of dramatic literature through formal and informal presentations.

### **Intermediate High School Standards - Communication**

I.C.2.1 - Use improvisation and acting skills, such as observation, concentration, and characterization, to demonstrate given situations.

I.C.2.2 - Interpret scenes through formal and informal presentations.

### **Intermediate High School Standards - Analysis**

I.A.1.1 - Analyze the plot structure and the thematic, technical, and dramaturgical elements within plays.

### **Proficient High School Standards - Communication**

P.C.2.2 - Interpret monologues through formal and informal presentations.

### **Proficient High School Standards - Analysis**

P.A.1.1 - Analyze full-length plays in terms of plot structure, pacing, given circumstances, and character development.

### **Advanced High School Standards - Communication**

A.C.2.2 - Interpret scripts through formal and informal presentations.

### **Advanced High School Standards - Analysis**

A.A.1.1 - Differentiate the plot structure, pacing, given circumstances, and character development within plays from a variety of theatre genres.

## **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Theatre Arts**

### **MS 117.211 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and**

### **Understanding**

C.1.E - identify theatrical vocabulary and terminology, including basic anatomy of theatre spaces.

C.1.F - identify the structure and form in examples of dramatic literature.

### **MS 117.211 LII - Creative Expression: performance**

C.2.F - create environments, characters, and actions.

### **MS 117.212 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

B.1.E - demonstrate knowledge of theatrical vocabulary and terminology.

B.1.F - analyze and evaluate the structure and form of dramatic literature.

### **MS 117.212 LII - Creative Expression: performance**

B.2.B - define characters by what they do, what they say, and what others say about them.

### **HS 117.315 LI - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.E - analyze characters by describing attributes such as physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions through reading scripts of published plays.

C.1.F - demonstrate a working knowledge of the language of theatre such as stage terminology, elements of theatre, or theatrical conventions.

### **HS 117.316 LII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.D - analyze dramatic structure and genre.

### **HS 117.317 LIII - Foundations: Inquiry and Understanding**

C.1.A - apply theatre preparation and warm-up techniques effectively.

C.1.D - analyze and evaluate dramatic structure and genre.

### **HS 117.318 LIV - Creative Expression: performance**

C.2.C - analyze and interpret characters from various genres and styles, describing physical, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions.

C.2.D - interpret scripted scenes of various styles to portray believable characters.

## **Alberta, Canada**

### **Improvisation Drama 10**

1 - use warmup techniques for preparation of body, voice and mind

### **Acting Drama 20**

1 - analyze a script for explicit character clues

3 - demonstrate understanding of and identity motivation and objectives (overall, main and immediate).

### **Theatre Studies Drama 30 (Early or Middle or Late drama)**

4 - recognize dramatic structure of a play

### **Junior Goal II Objectives**

become familiar with dramatic terminology and script format

### **Junior Goal III Objectives**

develop awareness of various conventions of theatre

develop the ability to analyze and assess the process and the art

### **Junior Orientation**

generate imaginative and creative solutions to problems

listen effectively

- meet deadlines and follow through on individual and group commitments

- offer and accept constructive criticism, given specific guidelines, with a desire to improve

- recognize the purposes of and participate in warmup activities

- share ideas confidently with others

- support positivity the work of others

### **Improvisation/Acting Level I - Beginning**

- 6 - understand and apply the essential elements of a story: character, setting, conflict, climax and plot

- 7 - use stage vocabulary: stage areas, body positions and crosses

### **Improvisation/Acting Level II - Intermediate**

- 21 - sustain a character throughout an exercise or scene

### **Junior Goal I Objectives**

- develop a sense of responsibility and commitment

- develop self-confidence

- develop self-discipline

- develop the willingness to make a decision, act upon it and accept the results

- extend the ability to explore meaning through abstract concepts

- extend the ability to think imaginatively and creatively

- strengthen powers of concentration

### **Senior Goal I Objectives**

- apply imaginative and creative thought to problem-solving situations

- demonstrate the ability to considered decisions, act upon them and accept the results

- extend the ability to concentrate

- increase self-confidence

- increase self-discipline

### **Orientation Drama 10**

- concentrate on the task at hand

- listen to self and others

- make effective decisions or choices

- positively support the work of others

- solve problems imaginatively and creatively

- work with abstract concepts

activities and explain how they can be useful in work and other social contexts (e.g., explain in a journal how their brainstorming and negotiation skills support teamwork in a variety of contexts)

## **Ontario, Canada**

### **Grades 9 & 10 - Foundations - Concepts and Terminology**

- C.1.1 - identify the drama forms, elements, conventions, and techniques used in their own and others' drama works, and explain how the various components are used, or can be used, to achieve specific effects, with a focus on ensemble drama works (e.g., how a comic drama form can be used to convey a serious message, how setting and time period can be used to sharpen the focus on a moral dilemma, how characters can be used to vary the mood within a drama)

- C.1.2 - demonstrate an understanding of and use correct terminology to refer to the forms, elements, conventions, and techniques of drama, with a focus on ensemble drama works (e.g., chorus, protagonist, ingénue, supporting role, act, scene, climax, resolution, improvisation, mask, freeze-frame image)

### **Grades 9 & 10 - Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing - Connections Beyond the Classroom**

- B.3.2 - identify skills they have developed through drama