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**Active Citizenship in the Drama Classroom**

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# ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

in the  
*Drama Classroom*



Theatrefolk®

Kerry Hishon

Active Citizenship in the Drama Classroom  
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# INTRODUCTION

The definition of **citizenship** is to be a citizen of a country, and being a citizen comes with rights (eg: the right to vote) and responsibilities (eg: paying taxes). **Active citizenship** refers to the idea that citizens should play an active role in being a member of a country and making it a better place.

Active citizenship can be explored in a variety of ways:

- From local community activities, like volunteering, to national activities.
- Global citizenship is about being a citizen of the world and being aware of what's happening in other areas of the world.
- Digital citizenship refers to being an Internet citizen and the rights and responsibilities involved in using the Internet.

To be an active citizen requires skills that are practiced daily in the drama classroom: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and empathy, to name a few. This toolkit offers articles and activities that you can use with your students to encourage them to start thinking about their place in their community, their country, the world and beyond.

# DRAMA ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Dramatic events are fantastic for reaching out to the community, fundraising, raising awareness for various causes, and having a great time while you're at it. If your school has a requirement of community service hours for your students to graduate, it's a great way for students to obtain those hours – or to add some volunteering experience to their resumes.

Here are some ideas for your students to get their creative and altruistic juices flowing. Many of these ideas require some sort of performance. This is a great way to incorporate classroom work, devised performances, or scenes/songs from rehearsals of your current show. Combining their final performances with community service will give students some additional fire to complete and polish their projects. Get excited to give back!

- Visit a local retirement home or hospital and provide entertainment for the residents/patients.
- Lead a drama class or activity for a primary school, Brownies/Scouts group, Boys & Girls club, or other local youth group.
- Select a favourite charity to donate a portion of ticket sales to from an upcoming performance of your show.
- Create and perform a piece of work (such as a group scene or a series of monologues) that addresses an issue that is important to your students (bullying, students' rights, body issues, etc.).
- Host a coffeehouse evening at your school for students to sign up for and perform a piece of their choice, such as a song, monologue, or poem, and donate admission fees to charity. If you wish, all the pieces can relate to a theme. This gives students the chance to volunteer in various capacities, including sound and lighting, publicity, box office, and hosting.
- For environmentally-focused students, figure out a way to create a low-impact performance – perhaps performed outside in natural light, with costumes and props made from repurposed items, music performed on acoustic instruments, and programs printed on recycled paper.
- Have students research plays and musicals that relate to current events or social issues. How could one of those plays be used as a jumping-off point for devising a new piece of theatre on the same topic, an outreach opportunity, or a fundraising venture?
- Volunteer to help with various technical or backstage roles for an elementary school production, such as costumes, props, backstage supervision, or operating sound and lights.

- Look into local opportunities where students' performance or technical skills can be used to give back, such as children's fun fairs, library reading programs, fringe festivals, or seasonal community events (such as a Halloween haunted house).
- Research local historical events, create a theatrical piece from them, and present it as part of a heritage event or town celebration.

These are only a few of the interesting outreach ideas that students can employ for their community service projects. Use the worksheet and Reflection on the next page to help students brainstorm and organize their ideas for a theatrical community service project.

# ***Drama Activities for Community Service***

## *Worksheet*

Three causes or issues that are important to me:

- 
- 
- 

Three charities that help with the causes/issues above (do some research if you aren't currently aware of any):

- 
- 
- 

Three events that our class could organize to collaborate with this cause:

- 
- 
- 

Select one of the events that would be most appropriate/interesting/fun/useful to pursue. Why did you select that event?

What is the purpose of the event (fundraising, raising awareness of a cause, community outreach, etc.)?



What type of performance material/content would need to be prepared?

What physical materials/resources would be needed (technical equipment, costumes, volunteers, etc.)?

How much time would be needed to plan and execute this event?

## ***Reflection Questions***

1. Why is community service important?
2. What can you learn from community service?
3. List three ways that local services/charities/causes could benefit from assistance from a drama class or drama students.
4. List three ways that students benefit from volunteering or performing community service.

# Teaching Resources

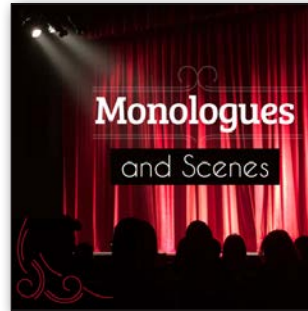
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



## The Drama Classroom Companion

*The Drama Classroom Companion* is filled with articles and exercises to build the skills needed for theatrical performance as well as real world skills like creative thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

[theatrefolk.com/companion](http://theatrefolk.com/companion)

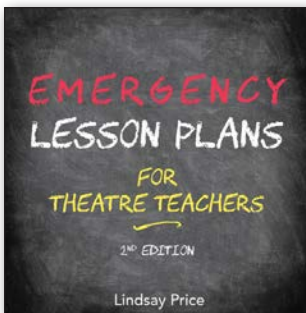


## Monologue and Scene Collections

Whether it's for classwork, competitions or auditions, these collections of student-appropriate monologues and scenes can help you find what you're looking for.

All monologues and scenes come from published plays and include running-times, descriptions, character notes and staging suggestions.

[theatrefolk.com/collections](http://theatrefolk.com/collections)



## Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers

*Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers, 2nd edition* gives you the tools and resources you need to confidently leave your class in the hands of a substitute teacher. Customize your lesson plans to suit the specific needs of your class when you can't be there.

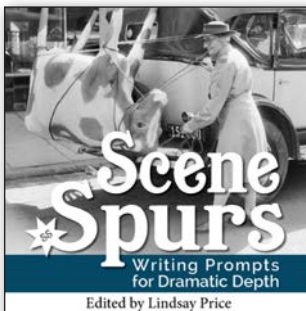
[theatrefolk.com/elp](http://theatrefolk.com/elp)



## The Student Director's Handbook

Help students take their show from first audition to opening night with *The Student Director's Handbook*. This easy-to-use ebook is full of guidelines, tips and templates designed to help students create a vision, circumvent problems and organize rehearsals on their way to a successful production.

[theatrefolk.com/student-director](http://theatrefolk.com/student-director)



## Scene-Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic Depth

*Scene Spurs* is a collection of photo-based writing prompts developed by playwright Lindsay Price. The set includes 35 different Spurs along with an instruction guide to integrate them into your drama classroom.

[theatrefolk.com/spurs](http://theatrefolk.com/spurs)

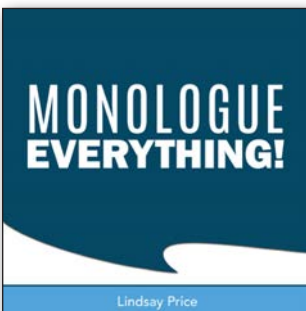


## Write Your Own Vignette Play

Your students want to write and perform an original play. You want to include a playwriting unit in your program. But where to start? What if your students have never written a play before? What if you've never written before?

*Write Your Own Vignette Play* will answer all your questions and more

[theatrefolk.com/write\\_vignette](http://theatrefolk.com/write_vignette)



## The Monologue Everything Program

Want your students to write their own monologues? Have you tried to incorporate monologue units into the classroom with less-than-satisfactory results?

[theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything](http://theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything)



## Competition Material

Plays, monologues, and scenes for drama competitions including royalty information and exemptions.

[theatrefolk.com/competition](http://theatrefolk.com/competition)



## Practical Technical Theater: The Complete Solution for Technical Theater Classrooms

This series of instructional DVDs is perfect for the teacher who feels more at home with a prompt book than a hammer, and would welcome a new, visually oriented teaching tool for their tech classes and production crews.

[theatrefolk.com/ptt](http://theatrefolk.com/ptt)



[www.theatrefolk.com/resources](http://www.theatrefolk.com/resources)