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## Theatre and Drama Lesson Plans

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**Take the “If You Were a Movie, What Kind Would You Be?” Quiz on CBC Kids.**

Take the Quiz:

<https://www.cbc.ca/kidscbc2/the-feed/sci-fi-musical-fantasy-or-even-adventure-which-one-are-you>

Guided Learning:

- What GENRE (or type) of movie did the quiz pick for you? Do you agree with the quiz results?
- Now write a 2-page story using this GENRE as inspiration. Example: if you got “Fantasy” you could write a story about a mermaid and a fairy deciding which food to have for dinner together.
- After you write your story do you think you can turn it into a script to perform for your family? If you don’t have siblings who can act with you, try creating a MONOLOGUE (speech for one actor to perform on stage).





**Stage Partners has released a free set of monologues entitled, “Stranded: Views from Quarantine (a monologue play),” to manifest feelings of isolation, fear, and anxiety from the perspective of 21 unique characters quarantined on a cruise ship.**

Download the Play (suited for High School level):

<https://www.yourstagepartners.com/products/stranded-views-from-quarantine-a-monologue-play>

Guided Learning:

- Read through the set of monologues. Which script or character do you relate to the most? Choose one monologue.
- Answer the following questions about the monologue: What does the character look like? How old is the character? What do they sound like? How do they move? What emotions are they feeling? What clues can you find in the script that tells you more about the character? Highlight, underline or make notes.

Adaptations for Younger Age Groups:

- For kids in elementary or middle school, they can create the character or person who could be on a cruise ship. What type of people would be on a cruise ship? Choose one. Why is that person on the ship? Who did they come with? What type of person were they before they were on the ship? What are their fears for the future and how are they feeling?
- Write a 1-2 minute monologue (1-page or less).

For All Groups:

- Rehearse the monologue. Transform yourself into the character by thinking about the answers to the questions.
- Search through your closets at home. What items can you use to dress yourself up like your character?
- Perform your monologue for family and friends through video conferencing or record yourself to post on social media or YouTube.





**Do a dramatic reading of a story book for a special family member or friend. See an example by Ming-Na Wen (voice actor for Disney’s Mulan) as she reads “A Place for Mulan.”**

Watch the Video:

<https://youtu.be/wcjbsW9xrJg>

Guided Learning:

- Find a storybook at home that you love and would like to read. Read the story once in your head to remind yourself about the story.
- What are the points of the book that you want to highlight? In the example, Ming-Na points out special illustrations she wants the reader to know about.
- What are things you want to describe or you want the reader to know more about? During the reading, Ming-Na explained about Chinese language for people who may not know how it is written with symbols not letters.
- Can you come up with a special voice for the characters in the book? Listen to how Ming-na changes her voice for the father and Mulan.
- What points in the book should you pause during or what parts should you read quicker for dramatic effect?
- What do you think are special morals or themes in this book? Ming-Na explained how “A Place for Mulan” was all about being unique, different, and being you!
- Practice reading or come up with a script to help you remember. Record a video while you dramatically read the story and send it to someone who you think would like to hear the story. Maybe you have a younger cousin or friend or grandparent you want to send the video to.





**Discover more about the building blocks of improvisational theatre (or 5mprove) with the Canadian Improv Games (CIG).**

Follow Online Tutorials:

<http://improv.ca/training/video/>

Guided Learning:

- The CIG takes you through seven building blocks of 5mprove: making offers, accepting offers, advancing, listening, commitment, stakes, and staging.
- After watching the seven video examples, learn about some 5mprove warm-ups and exercises you can play with people in your house by watching these demonstrations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIHnGvbiWU8>
- Try out some of the games listed on the Theatrefolk website: <https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/improv-games-for-collaboration/> or head to the Improv Encyclopedia and chose a games at random from their list of hundreds of games: <http://improvenyclopedia.org/games/>





## Create a character profile and write a monologue for your character.

Download a Template:

<https://k-3teacherresources.com/teaching-resource/character-profile-template/>

Guided Learning:

- Try some of these methods to create your characters: put together an outfit and use the clothing as inspiration for the character; read a picture book or short story and use one of the characters as inspiration; adapt and modify a celebrity's history as inspiration for your character; or use real animals, mythical creatures, or otherworldly beings as inspiration;
- Once you have decided on a character idea, put together a full character profile by answering the following questions:
  - What is your character's name?
  - What does your character look like? Either draw the character or write out using descriptive words.
  - How old is your character?
  - Where and in what time does your character live?
  - What does your character do? Think about their job and what they do for hobbies or fun.
  - Does your character have any family or important relationships with friends or enemies?
  - What does your character love and hate?
  - What is your character's greatest fear?
  - What are your character's hopes for the future?
- Now that you know your character, you can use this information to determine how to become you character and to know how your character will react to new situations or to other people. This will give you all the information you need to write your monologue.





**Create a thank you video or advertise a product in your home.**

Watch a Video Example by Author Mo Willems:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKvNwfHa\\_tc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKvNwfHa_tc)

Guided Learning:

- What are you thankful for?
- Are you having a hard time thinking of something to be thankful for? Thank you's don't have to be big. You could be thankful that the sky is blue instead of grey, or maybe you're thankful for a special blanket or toy.
- Make a thank you video at home, or, make a thank you skit and perform it live for your family.
- Extension: make a thank you chart for the week, and every day, list something new to be thankful for.





**Performing theatre involves so much more than memorizing a script. Learn more about the basic language of theatre!**

Watch the Two Videos:

Types of Stages - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L99g\\_Wg5Gh8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L99g_Wg5Gh8)

Stage Terms - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un85gA0S1wc>

Guided Learning:

- Before watching the videos, ask your child if they know any theatre terms or any types of stages. Have they heard words like upstage or downstage? Write out a list of these words. Also, think about different types of stages, such as Regina's Globe Theatre or your child's school auditorium.
- Watch the two videos.
- What is one term that really sounded strange to you? Explain it to a family member.
- What do the directors and actors have to consider with different types of stages?
- Theatre has a language all its own; what could happen if you confused the terms "down" and "in?"
- Extension: check out these beginner theatre terms: <http://www.theatre crafts.com/pages/home/topics/beginners/glossary/>. How many of the words did you know already? How many were new? Were any of the definitions different from the definition that you know (example: apron)?







**Actors certainly bring a character to life, but the actors do not create the set or pick out their own costumes. Who does this for them, and how are these people behind the scenes just as important as the actors?**

Here is a short list of some different jobs in theatre:

<https://www.theatreontario.org/resources/training-resources/school-tools-for-high-school/designing-for-theatre.aspx>

This documentary shows the process of set design (27 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXYX5YXjYaA>

\*Disclaimer: one play in this documentary deals with the subject of slavery. Time is 15:04-16:23

Guided Learning:

- What is one thing that you learned about being a set designer?
- Think about the other important people behind the scenes, such as a costume designer, or lighting technician; what job would appeal to you the most, and why?
- Some of these sets are quite extravagant. What kind of people would need to help you build a set (i.e. carpenters, painters, etc.)?
- Both set designers in the documentary had different ways of visualizing their creation. Would you prefer to draw your stage, or create a diorama?
- For a fun craft, create a diorama of a scene from your favourite book!  
<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Diorama>
  - Think about all of the different things you will need for your scene. If your scene is outside, your backdrop may need to be a blue sky, maybe you'll need some grass.
  - A book shows a flat picture, but your diorama is 3D! If there is a tree, should it be close to the front, or the back? If the picture in your book shows a bush in front of the tree, that means the tree will have to go behind the bush.
  - Think about the size of the characters in relation to the size of other objects in your diorama. You don't want to make your person taller than say, a house, or a tree!





**With so many people helping with a theatre production, what could possibly go wrong?**

“The Play that Goes Wrong” (10 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOWO4gg-whg>

\*Disclaimer: subject of this play is a murder mystery. This lesson may be better suited for ages 12+

Guided Learning:

- There were mistakes everywhere in this play!
  - How many mistakes did you count? Write them down.
  - Look at your list of the found mistakes. How could you fix them?
  - Sometimes, it was not the actors who made the mistakes. Where did you see technical mistakes? Ex. Lighting, set design, props.
  - One important part of theatre is that the show must go on. Did you notice that despite the mistakes, the actors continued in their roles? What would you do if you made a mistake on stage?
- This play is made to make an audience laugh, and when things go wrong, the actors try to make the best of the situation. Knowing this, ask yourself
  - Have you ever seen a funny play or movie where there is no problem that the characters have to fix?
  - Why do you think a problem is so important to the plot of a comedy?





## Can you have a performance without a script? You sure can! All you need is your imagination

Try this fun improv game:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2j2VptTk5M>

Here is another improv idea from the show “Whose Line is it Anyway?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d-KTKIQIGg>

Guided Learning:

- Either with a family member, or a friend using an approved video messaging app, try playing “What are you Doing?”
  - What was your favourite action that you did, and what did you say you were doing?
  - What was your favourite action that your friend did?
  - Did you struggle to think of an answer to “What are you Doing?” or did an answer come quickly to you?
- Find some of your toys or belongings to use as props
  - Play a similar game to the one in “Whose Line is it Anyway?”
  - What props did you use?
  - What was the funniest improvisation you made with the props?
  - Try switching props and see what the other person comes up with.





**Not every stage is the same. Here are some unique theatres from all over the world.**

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/11-dramatic-virtual-tours-of-stages-around-the-world/1gJiszMqItReJA>

Shakespeare is so important to the world of theatre, that he even has some theatres named after him. Here is a unique theatre named after Shakespeare:

<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/about-us/virtual-tour/>

Theatres are not just inside. Some of the oldest theatres we have discovered have been outdoor theatres: <https://www.amexessentials.com/top-outdoor-open-air-theatres/>

Some stages can even move: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/file/9401/view>

Guided Learning:

- Think about some of the stages you saw in the guided tours above.
  - What was your favourite stage set up?
  - What about this stage made it your favourite? Pay attention to the colours and fine details of your favourite stage.
  - What kind of plays would you like to see in that space?
  - What are some similarities about the spaces that you saw? What are some differences?
  - What do you think some challenges would be when performing in an outdoor theatre? Ex. One outdoor theatre used car headlights to provide lighting!
- There are some theatres, like Regina's own Globe Theatre, where the stage is in the middle of the audience, also known as a theatre in the round.
  - Watch this video about how actors have to change the way they act in this kind of theatre: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8cHJY1I\\_HQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8cHJY1I_HQ)
  - How would you change the scene of a stage play in this kind of setting?  
Remember: there are no backdrops with a theatre in the round.
- Where would you like to perform, and how would you use all of the elements of the stage in your performance? Ex. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre has a second storey on top of the stage, and the National Theatre has a rotating drum in the middle of the stage that can move up and down. How would you incorporate this into your act?





**Theatre actors use special techniques that help make sure that the audience at the back of the room can hear them without having to use a microphone. Learn the difference between projecting your voice, and yelling.**

Read the Post: <https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/projecting-your-voice-without-yelling/>

Watch the Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtkowhNPm1s>

Guided Learning:

- Why do you think actors need to project their voice, rather than yell?
- Even when you're whispering, you can project your voice! Stand on one end of a room in your home, and have a member of the household stand on the other end. Try the techniques you learned in the video, but whisper instead of speaking out loud. Could the other person hear you?
  - Pay attention to how you are breathing while you do this. Remember to use your diaphragm.
  - Try doing this without moving your lips very much. Did it sound the same? Is it helpful to move your mouth more when you project a whisper?
- Try projecting with your actual voice outside. Read a passage from a book, or sing a few lines from your favourite song.
  - Notice how your throat feels. If your throat is feeling sore, refer back to the above article and video to make sure that you keep your throat from getting sore. Also, drink some water!
  - If your throat is getting sore, do not keep trying to project! Give your vocal cords a break.
  - Read this post to find out how to protect your vocal cords:  
<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/4-weird-ways-you-can-damage-your-vocal-cords/>





**If the thought of being on stage scares you, you may have stage fright! Stage fright is perfectly normal, and it is something that you can overcome. With a little bit of practice, you'll be excited to be on stage!**

Read the Article:

<https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/social-anxiety-disorder/treatment/conquering-stage-fright>

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9g9o6BPafnM&t=630s>

Guided Learning:

- Have you ever experienced stage fright?
  - What emotions did you feel?
  - What did you notice about the way your body felt?
- Practice a short exercise to get over your stage fright
  - Act out a scene from your favourite book in front of your family.
  - Read out loud by yourself until you feel comfortable reading out loud to your family.





**A costume can help bring a character to life, but who chooses the costume, and how do they make their choices? Learn about the world of costume design, and how important a character's outfit really is.**

Watch the Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLW45yeCoNA>

Guided Learning:

- Watch this scene from The Incredibles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-lj7EIJnqM>
  - What kind of things did Edna Mode have to think about while she was designing costumes for The Incredibles?
  - If you had to design a costume for a hero like Superman, how would you make his costume?
- Create a character of your own using items of clothing from your own wardrobe, and ask yourself some of the following questions about your character:
  - What is your character's name?
  - How old are they?
  - Are they rich, or poor?
  - What sort of world do they live in? Is it realistic, or magical?
  - Is your character nice, or are they a villain? \*\*Note: If you look at a majority of Disney Villains, they will have green, purple, black, or a combination of all 3 somewhere on their costume!
  - Do they live somewhere hot, or cold?
  - What year is your character living in? Do you need special clothes for that year?
- Think about everything that you had to think about while designing your costume
  - Are you surprised at how much work you did to bring your character to life?
  - What does your costume say about the character that you made?
  - How did you feel while transforming into this character?





**Learning and memorizing a script can be difficult, but these instructors from the University of Saskatchewan figured out how to teach students a new language through theatre practices!**

Indigenous Performance Methods:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-PcVQa-QAE&t=216s>

Guided Learning:

- Learning a new language can be difficult!
  - Do you think you could learn a new language better if there was an action associated with each word?
  - Do you learn better by writing things down and reading them over, or do you learn better by doing something?
  - Watch this video that shows some basic Cree words:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dyliv8Ob21U>
  - Try saying these new words, but add an action when you speak them. For example, when saying Nîya, point to yourself. Does this make it easier for you to remember the word?
- In the University of Saskatchewan videos, the people interviewed said that they were scared of the Cree language being lost.
  - Why do you think language is so important to a culture?
  - Try to imagine your life without language. How would you express your feelings? How would you ask your parents to go outside and play?
  - Without language, you would have to communicate through actions. Do you think this is why it is helpful to associate an action with a word?







**Storytelling is the original performance art! Indigenous peoples have been sharing stories for many years, and have been keeping young ones engaged by being such active and enigmatic speakers. Learn about Indigenous storytelling!**

11 Things You Should Know About Aboriginal Oral Traditions:

<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/11-things-you-should-know-about-aboriginal-oral-traditions>

Native American Oral Storytelling & History:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JcKbN\\_GjCE&t=613s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JcKbN_GjCE&t=613s)

Guided Learning:

- Some elders go to schools to give the gift of storytelling to a new generation.
  - Have you ever had someone come to your school for storytelling?
  - Do you remember the stories that were told?
  - What was your favourite story? What made it so special to you?
  - Was there anything else that the storyteller said that you felt was important? What was it?
  - How did the story teller use their voice to keep you engaged? Did they use the same tone throughout, or did they change how they spoke depending on what was happening?
- Indigenous stories are great for every family and available for all ages!
  - Check out this CBC article that gives the titles of some wonderful Indigenous stories for kids:  
<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/10-beautiful-indigenous-childrens-books-to-add-to-your-library>
- Try telling stories, but get excited about it!
  - Pick a short book that you enjoy.
  - Read it out loud, either by yourself, or to a family member.
  - Use your voice to add excitement to the story. If a character is angry, use an angry voice. If a character is excited, make sure you sound just as excited as they are!
  - How did you feel about your performance? Would you have changed anything?

