

This pack contains ten simple drama lessons for cross-curricular classroom work. These lessons can be delivered in the classroom, either with chairs and tables pushed back, or with children in their regular places. They are discrete, stand-alone, lessons but their simple methods can be used to explore any texts, issues, or characters across the curriculum. Each lesson contains ideas for follow-on work which shows how the ideas can be expanded or used across the curriculum.

The **Key Skills** used in each lesson have been listed. These are selected from the following:

- Improvisation:** spontaneous improvisation, prepared improvisation, conversations, pretending, etc.
- Debate:** discussing two sides of an issue, mantle of the expert, conscience alley, etc.
- Performance:** showing improvisations, freezes, mimes, script reading, etc.
- Role Play:** working as characters, hotseating, being someone or something else, etc.
- Discussion:** responding to questions, asking questions, discussing the drama, preparing drama, etc.
- Presentations:** introducing drama, readings, narration, presenting information, etc.

I have also specified the group dynamics for each lesson, stipulating whether the children work alone, in pairs, in small groups or as a whole group. Children may respond as individuals within the whole group context, for example, when answering questions, performing mimes, asking questions, and so on. Whole group activities are those where children (and teacher) work together simultaneously. I have included the group dynamics for all follow-on work in the list.

LESSON 5: MIME THROUGH A WINDOW

Space/Resources: small/medium space; mime ideas prepared on cards in advance (suggestions below).

Key Skills: improvisation; discussion; role play; presentation.

Children Work: in pairs; individually as part of the whole group; in small groups.

Ask two children to stand at the front of the class and tell them to imagine that a large glass window separates the two of them. Explain that one person needs to convey a message to the other, but that this can only be done in mime because speech will not be heard through the 'window'! Advise the children to convey their messages as clearly and effectively as they can, so that the person on the other side of the window understands them.

When the two volunteers know what they need to do, ask **one** of them to select a card (hiding it from view) and to mime the message on that card 'through the window' to their partner. Reinforce that the mime needs to be as clear and expressive as possible. The partner must try to work out what the mime means, and what message is being conveyed. Allow them several guesses – especially if they get close to the answer.

Encourage children watching to remain silent but, if the person being mimed to can't work out what the mime is, invite answers from the rest of the class. If no one guesses the mime, reveal it to the children and invite suggestions for how this message could have been mimed more effectively, allowing one or two children to show their ideas to the rest of the group.

Repeat the process several times, selecting two new children and a different card each time and using each turn to build on the children's physical communication skills.

MIME IDEAS ARE:

- Your roof is on fire
- Your dog has been in my garden and dug up my flower bed
- Do you want any milk?
- I've got a big, heavy parcel to deliver to you
- Your guinea pig has escaped
- There's been a car accident and I need to ring the emergency services
- I've locked myself out of my house!
- There's a gas leak and the street is being evacuated!
- Your cat is stuck up a tree
- Do you want your windows cleaned?

Finally, encourage the children to think further about their work by asking:

- Did you enjoy that? Why/why not?
- Was it difficult to do? Why?
- How could the mimes have been made more understandable?
- What have you learned from this activity?

LESSON 9: CHARACTER ADVERTS

Space/Resources: medium/large space; character types prepared on cards in advance (suggestions below).

Key Skills: improvisation; discussion; performance; role play; presentation.

Children Work: in pairs; in small groups; individually as part of the whole group.

Ask the children to form pairs or groups of up to four. Explain that they are going to create short television adverts to perform to the rest of the group, and that these will be based on character types written on cards. Explain that each group will select a character card at random (without seeing it) and will then devise their television advert based upon something connected with that character. For example, a group selecting the character card 'cowboy' might devise and present an advertisement for – say – a cowboy hat, a lasso, horse riding lessons, jeans, and so on.

Advise the children that their improvised TV advertisements must not last any longer than one minute, that every member of their group must be involved, and remind them that the product being promoted must be directly linked to the character on the card they have selected.

When all of the children understand what is expected of them, turn the character cards face down and ask each pair/group to select a card. Do not allow any cards to be exchanged once they've been chosen!

CHARACTER IDEAS FOR CARDS ARE:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Orchestra conductor | <input type="radio"/> Doctor |
| <input type="radio"/> Judge | <input type="radio"/> Zoo keeper |
| <input type="radio"/> Wizard | <input type="radio"/> Ballerina |
| <input type="radio"/> Hairdresser | <input type="radio"/> Police officer |
| <input type="radio"/> Bank robber | <input type="radio"/> Clown |

Allow the children ten minutes to discuss, plan, prepare and rehearse their character adverts, and give them regular time updates as they're working. When the time limit is up, ask each pair/group to show their character advert in turn to the rest of the class. Encourage audience members to remain silent and respectful whilst watching and to applaud at the end of each performance. Everyone should try to guess what the character is by what the advertisement is promoting. Comment positively on each performance.

Encourage children to reflect on the activity by asking:

- Did you enjoy doing that? Why/why not?
- Which was the most persuasive advert?
- Which was the most realistic advert?
- If you could change anything about your performance, what would that be?
- What do you think you have learned from doing this?

Acknowledge all responses.