

LESSON 4: EXPLORING SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH SMALL GROUP STAGED READINGS OF EXCERPTS FROM "THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK"

LESSON AT A GLANCE

OBJECTIVE: Students will participate in a collaborative Staged Reading activity to identify social injustice and to demonstrate understanding of theatrical performances and literary analysis skills.

DURATION: 1-2 class periods, to be completed after lesson on "Creating Characters with Words and Voice"

MATERIALS: Handout 7: Staged Reading Vocabulary and Performance Organizer, Handout 8: Excerpts from the Play, Handout 9: Student Reflection Questions, Handout 10: Staged Reading Scoring Guide, Handout 11: Character Collage

STANDARDS:

Common Core State Standards, Reading: Literature, Grade Six: 3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Common Core State Standards, Speaking and Listening, Grade Seven: 1 Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media.

Common Core State Standards, Reading Standards for Literature, Grade Eight: 1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

VAPA Theatre, Grade Six: 2.2 Use effective vocal expression, gesture, facial expression, and timing to create character.

VAPA Theatre, Grade Seven: 4.2 Identify examples of how theatre, television, and film can influence or be influenced by politics and culture.

VAPA Theatre, Grade Seven: 5.2 Demonstrate projection, vocal variety, diction, gesture, and confidence in an oral presentation.

Social Justice Anchor Standard: Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.

Social Justice Anchor Standard: I can recognize and describe unfairness and injustice in many forms including attitudes, speech, behaviors, practices, and laws.

Social Emotional Learning Competencies: collaboration and cooperation, communication, listen with attention

LESSON AT A GLANCE, CONT'D

CONCEPTS/VOCABULARY:

Collaboration - the act of working together in a joint intellectual effort.

Conflict - the opposition of persons or forces giving rise to dramatic action in a play.

Diction - the pronunciation of words, the choice of words, and the manner in which a person expresses himself or herself.

Exposition - detailed information revealing the facts of a plot.

Injustice - lack of fairness or justice.

Monologue - a long speech by a single character.

Motivation - a character's reason for doing or saying things in a play.

Projection - the placement and delivery of volume, clarity, and distinctiveness of voice for communicating to an audience.

Protagonist - the main character of a play and the character with whom the audience identifies most strongly.

Social Injustice - unfair and unjust relations between the individual and society, measured by the unequal distribution of wealth, unequal opportunities for personal activity, and unequal social privileges.

Social Justice - the push towards or equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

Staged Reading - a form of theatre without sets or full costumes. The actors read from scripts, and may sit, stand, or incorporate minimal stage movement.

Vocal Quality - the characteristics of a voice such as shrill, nasal, raspy, breathy, booming, and so forth.

Positive Space - where the dancer's body is when dancing. It is the space where people mostly look when watching dancers.

Teamwork - the collective effort of a group of people.

Trust - confidence and trust in the reliability of someone.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How and why can theatre be used to teach about conflict and injustice in history?

How does an actor use literary analysis as well as vocal techniques, facial expressions, and gestures to convey a complex character in a staged reading?

What do we learn about Anne and her writing as the play progresses?

LESSON PLAN

Warm-Up

Remind students that they learned about diction, gesture, projection and vocal quality during the previous theater arts lesson. As a warm-up for the staged reading, ask each student to share how they are feeling in this moment by choosing a strong adjective and sharing it out loud with appropriate gestures (including facial expression), projection, and vocal quality. For example, one student might say, "happy" with a smile, a calm, clear voice, and a thumbs up. This can be done with everyone sharing in small groups, or with a few volunteers in front of the class, or as a whole class whip-around, with each student taking a turn.

MAIN LESSON

The main activity is a small group Staged Reading activity based on eight excerpts from the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The play is divided into two acts of five scenes each. Almost every scene ends with Anne performing a monologue that is based on an actual entry from her diary. A student handout is included in this lesson plan with the eight excerpts, which gives you the freedom to create eight small groups of approximately four students each, or to create smaller or larger groups based on your class size.

Introduction

All of the opening/reflection questions can be done as a whole group discussion or in small groups using academic language sentence starters.

1. Use a T-chart to write or project the words "Injustice" and "Social Injustice." Ask for volunteers to define the first term (lack of fairness or justice) and give examples. Student answers may be personal like sibling rivalry-related, which would go under the first term, or they may be larger, like racism, which would go under the second term.
2. Ask for student volunteers to then define "Social Injustice," and see if they can explain the difference between this term and "injustice." One definition of social injustice: unfair and unjust relations between the individual and society, measured by the unequal distribution of wealth, unequal opportunities for personal activity, and unequal social privileges.
3. Ask students for examples of social injustice to list under that side of the T-chart. Examples might be racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, slavery, genocide, the Holocaust, etc.
4. After you have enough examples, ask the question, "How can social injustice be rectified?" If no one suggests it, ask, "How could art, specifically theater, be one tool to combat social injustice?"

Main Activity

1. Tell students that they are going to answer this last question by first analyzing, then performing an excerpt from the play, "*The Diary of Anne Frank*." Remind students that the social injustice of the Holocaust, began with restrictions of wealth, opportunities, and rights for the Jewish people, relating back to the earlier definition of social injustice.
2. Pass out Handout 7: Staged Reading Vocabulary and Performance Organizer. Appoint one student per group to be the facilitator to keep students on track and to make sure all participate. Students should read directions, vocabulary words, and definitions out loud in their small groups.
3. Pass out the student copies of Handout 8: Excerpts from the Play, and assign each group an excerpt.

4. At this point, you may need to remind students of the characters in the play:
IN THE ANNEX WITH ANNE: her father Otto (Pim); her mother; her older sister, Margot; Mr. and Mrs. Van Dam and their son, Peter, who is a few years older than Anne; and Mr. Dussel;
OUTSIDE OF THE ANNEX, HELPING THE FRANKS: Miep Von Gies and Mr. Kraler.
5. Give students approximately 30 minutes to answer the questions, divide up and practice their own lines, and practice as a whole group.
6. The completed Staged Readings should be presented to the class in order from A-H because the diary entries are in chronological order. You have the option of using Handout 10: Staged Reading Scoring Guide for each group or each student.
7. Once the performances are complete, have students fill out the reflection question on Handout 7: Staged Reading Vocabulary and Performance Organizer.
8. For the final assessment, provide Handout 8: Student Reflection Questions for quiet writing, or discuss the questions as a whole group.

(Special note: if boys object to "playing" a girl, remind them that in Shakespeare's time and beyond, all parts were played by boys, plus actors are versatile.)

Demonstration of Learning

Task: Analyze and discuss what Anne Frank is thinking, feeling, and observing in your group's assigned monologue from the play, "The Diary of Anne Frank." Use this analysis, as well as what you learned about diction, gesture, projection, and vocal quality to present your group's Staged Reading.

Assessment Criteria:

- Each student in the group takes a turn delivering lines.
- Facial expressions and gestures communicate what Anne is thinking and feeling.
- Voices are projected well, and attention is paid to vocal quality.
- Analysis and reflection skills are evident in completed handouts.

Purpose: To deepen our understanding of how theatre can be used to educate audiences about historical injustices and their impact on individuals like Anne Frank, in order to recognize and combat injustice today.

Student Reflection

The questions below are on a separate student handout and can be answered by writing in class or as a homework assignment. They can also be answered in small group discussion or as a whole group discussion.

What did you learn about injustice as it relates to Anne Frank during WWII? How does this knowledge make you feel?

What was the strongest emotion Anne seemed to convey through her writing? What is your evidence? Could you relate to this emotion? Why or why not?

Do you think a dramatic presentation of her diary entries are an effective way to understand Anne's life? To understand history? Why or why not?

Do you think that watching a play like "The Diary of Anne Frank" can help viewers recognize and combat injustice today?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

Have students use what they've learned from watching the Staged Reading performances to complete Handout 11: Character Collage.