



Creative Curriculums

CREATING AND PORTRAYING A CHARACTER

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Recommended for 3rd—5th Grade

Standard - 9.1.3.B

Recognize, know, use and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review and revise original works in the arts.

Standard - 9.1.5.C

Know and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.

Standard - 9.1.5.E

Know and demonstrate how arts can communicate experiences, stories or emotions through the production of works in the arts.



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WHO IS YOUR CHARACTER?

MATERIALS: pen/pencil and paper.

KEY TERMS:

- **PORTRAY** - to represent or play the part of a character on stage or in film.
- **ANALYZE** - to study carefully to understand how something *or someone* works.
- **OBJECTIVE** - a character's specific goal in a scene or in a play.
- **OBSTACLE** - a person, object or situation standing between your character and their goal.

First, we must choose a character to **PORTRAY**. Perhaps you've been cast in a play as a specific role, or maybe you just want to pick a character to work on your own! If you're picking your own character, it can be any character you're familiar with whether they're from a book, movie, play, musical, or video game! Maybe it's a character that you think you're already a lot alike, or maybe it's someone totally different from you.

Think of the character you are portraying. Answer the following questions to get to know and **ANALYZE** your character. Think of the story your character is from and do your best to answer the questions based on those sources. If there is not an answer to the question in the source material, then make a choice on your own! Be specific in your answers. If you're going to portray a character you want to know them as well as you know yourself!

Character's Name?

What do others say about your character?

Character's Age?

Who is your character's best friend?

What does your character live?

If your character were an animal, what animal would they be?

What does your character do? (job or hobbies)

What does your character love?

What is your favorite thing your character does?

What does your character hate?

How is your character similar to you?

What does your character say about themselves?

How is your character different from you?

What does your character want? (Some examples might be to be king or queen, to save the day, to make a friend) This is your **OBJECTIVE**.

What is standing in between your character and what they want? (Some examples might be a villain, a situation, a physical obstacle) This is your **OBSTACLE**.

HOW DOES YOUR CHARACTER MOVE AND SPEAK?

KEY TERMS:

- **DIALECT** - How a person's location affects how they speak. Examples include Australian, British, American Southern, and so many more!
- **PITCH** - How high or low a sound or voice is.

PHYSICAL WARM UP

1. Walk around with a neutral body. Think of making your body a blank canvas by removing anything you do naturally in your walk. Maybe you put your hands in your pockets, maybe you play with your clothes. Let go of those things, and walk in a natural, relaxed manner.

2. Transition to walking as if you're being led by a specific body part. Imagine someone is pulling you by your hips. How does that change your walk? Go through this following list of body parts as if you're being led by them and imagine what kind of character may walk this way.

Your head

Your arms

Your chest

Your belly

Your hips

3. Transition to walking through different situations. Move through the following situation and imagine how you would move your body in those situations. Focus on telling the story entirely with your body!

How would you move through a snowstorm?

How would you move in a rainforest?

How would you move when you're excited?

How would you move when you're scared?

Now think about your character! Answer the following questions and think about how the answers would affect your body and movement.

How old is your character? An older person will move differently from a younger person.

How is your character built physically? Are they large and strong? Will that make them move slower? Faster?

What clothing does your character wear? A person in a ball gown or suit will move differently from a person in jeans and a t-shirt.

Go back to the warmup exercises and move through them again but this time as your character.

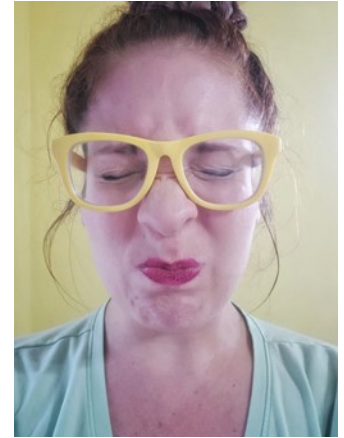
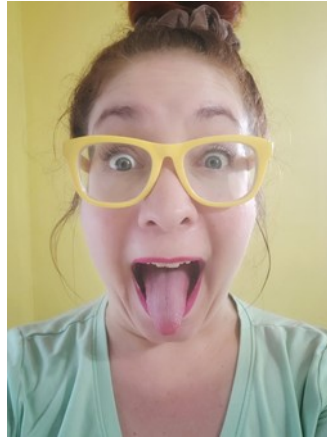
Does being led by a certain body part help you feel like your moving like your character?

How would your character move through the situations? How is it different from how you moved through them?

VOCAL WARM UP

- 1) Open your mouth as wide as your can, open your eyes wide, and stick your tongue out. This is *LION*. Then squish your face like you're a baby who's eaten a lemon.

This is *LEMON*. Go back and forth between *LION* and *LEMON* several times.



- 2) Put your hands on your belly and take a deep breath in through your nose. You should feel your belly fill up like a balloon. Slowly let the air out through your mouth.

- 3) Take a deep breath and take your voice as low and deep as you can while saying "OHhh". Take another deep breath and take your voice as high and light as you can again saying "OHhh". This is finding the **PITCH** in your voice! Move between the lowest part of your voice and the highest part of your voice, hitting all the pitches in between, like a siren.

- 4) Say the sentence below at different speeds. Try sloooowwww and drawwnn ouuuut. And then try speaking-as-fast-as-you-can!

"Hello! I didn't know you would be here. But you're here!"

Now think about your character! Answer the following questions and think about how the answers would affect your voice.

Where is your character from? Do they have a DIALECT?

Does your character think about what they say before they say it? Or do they blurt out whatever comes to their mind?

Does your character have a higher pitched voice? A lower pitched voice? Somewhere in the middle?

If you're working with a script, try speaking some of your character's lines while experimenting with your different voices. If you don't have a script, try the sentence we used to play with speed above.

It's okay if you don't sound exactly like the character you're portraying. You are unique so your portrayal of any character will be unique to you! Find a voice that feels true to your character and physically good to your voice. A character voice should never hurt! It's better to have a voice that doesn't sound exactly like your character but feels good on your throat.

WRITE A MONOLOGUE IN THE VOICE OF YOUR CHARACTER

MATERIALS: pen/pencil and paper

KEY TERMS:

- **MONOLOGUE** - when one character speaks for an extended period of time.

Write your own **MONOLOGUE** from the point of view of your character. This monologue can be about a part of their source story or something from your imagination. You can write about the character's best friend, or their favorite memory, or a secret they are keeping, or anything your imagination can dream up! Try to think of a high stakes topic. It's much more interesting to hear about a characters struggles or triumphs than to hear about what they had for breakfast.

When writing a monologue it's important to consider the 5 W's

WHO are you?

WHAT do you want?

WHERE are you physically?

WHEN in time are you?

WHY do you need to say these things?

This example uses Alice from Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll.

WHO are you? Alice

WHAT do you want? Adventures and excitement

WHERE are you physically? My family's garden.

WHEN in time are you? Before I fall down the rabbit hole to Wonderland.

WHY do you need to say these things? Because I'm sick of my boring, expected life.

MONOLOGUE

I've always felt that people are willing to live the most boring lives. They think tea time, and garden parties, and frilly dresses are the most exciting thing that could happen to them. But I want adventure! I want to try new things, see new places, meet new people! My dreams seem to be so much bigger than the world around me. One day, I will leave this dull garden and travel to all sorts of strange places. And I will be the most interesting person there. People will laugh at my jokes, marvel at my wit, and invite me to even more elegant and exciting parties. Then I will live the life I dream.

PORTRAY YOUR CHARACTER FOR AN AUDIENCE

Materials: Clothing, props, and scenery found in your own home!

KEY TERMS:

REHEARSE - to prepare for a public performance by practicing your spoken words and physical action repeatedly.

COSTUMES - the clothing worn by the characters to reflect their time, place, and personality.

PROPS - an object used by an actor during performance.

SET - the scenery that identifies the location of a performance

Take the monologue you wrote or a piece from your script and **REHEARSE** it. Imagine yourself where your character is physically, imagine what they've gone through, and focus on what you want. Speak your words aloud with your voice and physicality you have discovered.

COSTUMES don't make a character, but they sure can help! Gather some items from your house that feel like something your character would wear. It doesn't need to be a perfect copy of what the character wears, just something that makes you feel like your character! Playing a princess? Try a long skirt! Playing a farmer? Find a hat! Don't be afraid to get creative!

Does your character hold or use something during your monologue? You can find many **PROPS** easily in your home: books from your own shelves, a bowl from the kitchen, a hairbrush from the bathroom. And if you don't have what you need, make it! A toilet paper roll can become a microphone, a pencil can become a magic wand.

You can also get creative with your **SET**! Use a desk lamp to create dramatic lighting, hang a sheet from the mantle to create a backdrop, and place your stage somewhere where your audience can sit comfortably.

Once you've rehearsed, gathered your materials, and feel ready to perform you are ready to invite your audience into your home theater! When you're ready to begin your performance, take a deep breath and remind yourself of all the good and smart work you've already done. And then wow your audience with your amazing portrayal!