

AGE 6-8 KEY STAGE 1 / 2 “Dogger”

Literacy through Drama

DRAMA ACTIVITIES TO INVESTIGATE AND DEVELOP TEXT FROM PATRICE BALDWIN

A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF DRAMA STRATEGIES

Improvisation: Spontaneous make-believe talk and action, which explores relationships, behaviour and events. Improvisations can generate original material for script-writing or performance.

Teacher in role: The teacher takes on a role or series of roles, improvising with the children in order to challenge or inform from within the drama. Teachers should explain and discuss this strategy first with the children before using it and should signal clearly when they are in or out of role.

Tableau /still image: The children make themselves, individually or together into a still image construction of a key moment. Several still images may be sequenced and later form the basis of a storyboard, maybe with captions, speech or thought bubbles added.

Freeze-frame: Improvised action can be halted at a signal to produce a still image, which could then have thoughts or speech added.

Thought-tracking: Individuals in role speak their imagined thoughts aloud at a key moment. These thoughts can be written later, inside thought bubbles.

Hot-seating: An individual character is questioned by others and answers in role. The character may sit in a designated chair, which is the “hotseat”.

Collective voice (communal voice): The members of a group speak in turn, presenting a range of coherent ideas in role as one character. This can form the basis of shared writing in role later.

Conscience Alley: The class forms two lines facing each other and the character walks between the lines at a moment of moral conflict or indecision. As the character passes, each child has opportunity to offer advice and to try to influence the character. This activity can generate ideas to support persuasive writing later.

Role on the Wall:

An outline of a character can be drawn (either one large outline for the class to work on together or smaller outlines for individuals or groups). The children place information gathered about the character, around the outline. The area around the character’s outline can be subdivided into headed sections linked to the lesson’s learning objectives.

DRAMA ACTIVITIES (linked follow-up writing activities are in italics)

Read "Dogger" with the children first.

1. **INDIVIDUAL, (working in role/mime/improvisation):** Ask the children to imagine that they are Dave, holding and stroking Dogger. Invite them to whisper a secret into Dogger's ear if they wish.
2. **PAIRS, (working in role/mime/improvisation):** One child as Mum, the other as Dave. Mum gives Dave verbal instructions on how to wash Dogger in a bowl of soapy water. Dave follows the instructions as they are given. *Look at washing instructions on toys. Ask the children to write a washing label or a list of washing instructions, possibly with illustrations or symbols.*
3. **INDIVIDUAL, (working in role/mime/improvisation):** Ask the children to pretend to be Dave, holding Dogger against imaginary school railings. Ask them to talk aloud to Dogger and describe "what was going on" during the School Fair preparations. It may be helpful to let the children see the pictures of the Fair to refer to whilst they speak as eye-witnesses.
4. **WHOLE CLASS (thought-tracking):** What might Dave's thoughts be when he realises Dogger is missing? Invite each child to speak one of Dave's thoughts aloud in turn. *They could write Dave's thoughts in thought bubbles.*
5. **WHOLE CLASS CIRCLE, (game in drama context):** In the style of "I went to the market and I bought" (predictable structure and patterned language), each child adds a place that Mum looked for Dogger i.e. "Mum looked under the bed" "Mum looked under the bed and in the cupboard" etc. Children may add places of their own.
6. **WHOLE CLASS:** Look together at the picture of the School Fair. What are the people at the Fair doing? *Possibly make a class verb list together e.g. buying, rummaging etc.*
PAIRS, (tableau/working in role/improvisation): Ask them to select a pair of people from the Summer Fair picture, that they would like to be and to make themselves into a still picture of the people, before bringing the scene alive. You could make a Summer Fair stall later as a classroom role-play area. *They could make stall signs, adding detail to those in the book or creating price labels for different stalls. Write a sentence of a character's speech on a post-it and stick it on the big book picture.*
7. **WHOLE CLASS, (collective voice/teacher in role):** You pretend to be the girl who has bought Dogger. The children together become Dave's sister, Bella. They explain the problem to you and try to persuade you to give Dogger back to Dave.
8. **WHOLE CLASS, (conscience alley/teacher in role):** Bella might have a moment of indecision, a moral dilemma, as to whether or not to swap Big Teddy for Dogger. Ask the children to make two long lines facing each other. You walk slowly between the lines as Bella. As you pass, one line gives you reasons why you should swap Teddy and the other gives reasons why you should not. *The reasons could be gathered and listed in two separate columns*

9. **INDIVIDUAL, (working in role/improvisation)** Dave is reunited with Dogger. Ask the children to lie down (or sit) with their imaginary Dogger and whisper their feelings to him. *Dave's feelings could be gathered afterwards and form the basis of a piece of shared diary writing.*

Patrice Baldwin