



EVERGREEN

Teacher's Corner Lesson Plans

*Helping Teachers and Students Make the Most of
their Outdoor Classroom*

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Stories from the Outdoor Classroom*†

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Grade level: 4

Provincial curriculum links: Ontario

Subject: Drama, Language Arts

Keywords: role-play, reflection

Description

Intended as a culminating activity, students will visit an outdoor site they have been in frequently and work with others to represent their memorable moments at that site. Using assigned roles as their impetus, (eg. TV reporter, detective, etc.) they will create skits to share their stories with the larger group.

Curriculum Framework

Topic: Role-play, reflection

Strand: Creative Work (Drama), Oral and Visual Communication (Language)

Specific Lesson Goals:

- Drama - Enact or create, rehearse and present drama and dance works based on novels, stories, poems and plays
- Drama – Represent and interpret main characters by speaking, moving, and writing in role;
- Drama – demonstrate the ability to maintain concentration while in role;
- Language Arts – use appropriate tone of voice and gestures in social and classroom activities;
- Language Arts – present information to their peers in a focused and organized form on a topic of mutual interest.

* This exercise is adapted from *Teaching in the Outdoor Classroom*, Evergreen/TDSB Summer Institute, 2007, 82 pages.

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Preparation

Preparation Time:

- 5 minutes

Length of lesson:

- 60-75 minutes

Resources required:

- None

Procedure

1. Review rules for working outside. Take class to an outdoor setting they have worked in frequently (i.e. the schoolyard or a local park.) Create groups of 4-5.
2. Explain that this activity will ask them to remember their special memories of this place, and to share these with others in a fun way. Ask them to take a few minutes to remember what they have done here, and to discuss these memories in their group.
3. After a few minutes of discussion, ask each group to decide collectively which one memory is their favourite (or stands out in their minds the most) that they would like to share with the class.
4. Once each group has decided on a key memory, explain their task. They will be asked to create a skit about their groups' memory to share with the class, but in an unusual way. They will select a role for the group to take on in order to create their skit from that perspective; the roles can include detectives, musicians, police officers, TV reporters, clowns, insects or animals.
5. As an exemplar, share your key memory of the site with the class; ask them to identify a role for you to take on. Have them brainstorm a plot for a skit as a way to demonstrate the process.
6. Review with the class ways to make their skit engaging and interesting for others to watch: a range of characters, exciting dialogue, voice projection, strong emotions, etc. Encourage them to use the different features of the outdoor site to enhance their skit. Remind them to plan to keep to the time limit (the length of which is your choice.)
7. Be clear about the criteria that you will use for their assessment (provide the rubric or checklist for them to refer to.)
8. Provide the groups with 20-30 minutes to devise and practice their skits. Circulate amongst the groups to help them develop and practice their ideas.
9. When the groups are ready, ask them to perform the skit for the class. At the end of each skit, have other groups guess what the special memory was that the group was presenting.

Discussion and Questions

- Drama is a fun way to share our stories with others. Role-playing allows us to present these stories from a variety of perspectives. Was it easy or difficult to tell your story from a new role? Did you enjoy sharing your memories through a skit? What was it like to create your skit in a group?
- Places hold many memories for us as humans; they are important in the stories we build about our lives. Protecting special places is an important way we can help share those places with others. Have you done anything to protect a special place?

Student Assessment and Evaluation

A rubric, checklist or rating scale could be used to assess both the process of the roleplay (for staying on task, following instructions, working cooperatively) and the skit itself (for completion, focus on a special memory, use of appropriate drama techniques to share the memory, etc.)

Enrichment and Extension Activities

- The skits can be presented as a part of an Earth Day school assembly to share their memories of the place (especially if it is the schoolyard) with others in the school. All of the classes could then be asked to pledge to protect the outdoor site for future generations to enjoy.
- Students can write up their skits in book form, working individually or as a group.

Educator Notes

This should be taught as a culminating activity in an outdoor space where the class has been often and have had a variety of experiences.

References/Resources

Larry Swartz. *The New Drama Themes*. Pembroke Publishers, 2002.

Robert Rubinstein. *Curtains Up - Theatre Games and Storytelling*. Fulcrum Resources; 2000.

Marsh Cassidy. *Acting, Improvisations and Exercises*. Meriwether Publishing.