

Technical Theatre Lesson Unit

This lesson plan is intended for high school students.

This unit will introduce six elements of technical theatre. Students will be asked to explore and identify the use of ***Sets, Props, Lighting, Sound, Costumes and Color*** in relation to working on a theatrical production.

Objective: The objective of this unit is to introduce six elements of technical theatre. Students will be asked to explore their purpose, the connections they have to each other (how each goes hand n hand) and how they as theatre artists can make different choices in using these elements to tell a story

Lesson 1: **SET: Where are we?**

Central Question: How can students learn to tell a story without words just by “setting the stage”?

Purpose/ Aim: How do we as theatre artists help the audience know where we are using scenery and set dressing?

Materials: Classroom items; chairs, desks, garbage bins, miscellaneous items

Warm Up: Students will enter class and after “routine” warm up will be asked to “Role on the Wall”. There will be a few “large post-its” up at the top of each are different locations/ settings. Students will be asked to write what are some specific items/ landmarks they might find there.

Hook: Facilitator and Students will discuss what was written, choices they made and what they noticed. Facilitator will then focus on one “post-it” and have students help recreate it using classroom items and stage directions/ theatre literacy.

Main Activity: Students will be broken up into small group and be given a small scene with little to no information about the play. By reading the text as group students are asked to design a set together using classroom and items. Facilitator may ask students to act out scene.

Reflection: Each group will be asked to share why they chose to set their story up they way they presented it. Facilitator should make sure to ask if what was indicated in the text that made them make the artistic choices they did.

Lesson 2: **PROPS: Hold the phone!**

Central Question: How does the use of props help an actor in achieving objectives and tasks in a scene?

Purpose/ Aim: How can props help a scene move forward and help tell a story?

Materials: telephone, baby doll/ bundle that looks like a baby, coffee cup, newspaper

Warm Up: After students complete “routine” warm up they will form a circle and play “Pass the Rose” the objective is for students to pass an imaginary rose, enjoy it at first and then it pricks their finger. After being pricked the student should pass it on. The idea is that each student takes the time they need with the object (even though it is imaginary) let it tell the story and let it happen at their own time and pace.

Hook: Facilitator should line up said objects; Telephone, Baby Doll, Coffee Cup/ Newspaper. Facilitator will start a discussion about these objects; what are they? Where do you find them? Who might have them? What would they tell us about the person? Through this students will be asked to rearrange the room and create a set around these objects.

Main Activity: After the stage is set, the facilitator will ask students to enter the scene and take on a role given to them in secret by the facilitator. This will also give opportunity to try a few improv games out. The key is students must use these props and stay in role.

Reflection: A discussion should be led by the facilitator asking how the props affect their characters and the relationships they had with other actors/ characters on stage.

Lesson 3: **LIGHTING: Night and Day!**

Central Question: How can dramatically changing classroom lighting change the way students interpret and present scene work?

Purpose/ Aim: How does production lighting help create mood and help tell a story?

Materials: large sheets of fabric, flashlights, clip lights and multi color gels

Warm Up: After students come in and finish their “routine” warm up students will do a gallery walk with five pictures depicting different times of day and/ or mood.

Facilitator will then lead a discussion about what students notice/ lie/ wonder. Facilitator should ask questions about what we as audience members know about the story or perhaps what is going on in the picture just by the lighting or time of day.

Hook: Students will be broken into groups and given scenes. An example would be from *The Crucible* as it may take place at night and has frightening undertones. Students will then be asked to discuss in groups how they would light the scene.

Main Activity: Groups will then attempt to light the scene utilizing flashlights, clip lights gels and ceiling room lights. They can also use fabrics to create a shadow scene behind a curtain.

Reflection: Facilitator should lead group discussion about the scene share. Students should feel free to discuss what they notice/ liked / and wonder.

Lesson 4: **SOUND: Creating and Conducting a SOUNDSCAPE**

Central Question: How can the theatrical tool of SOUNDSCAPE help students define mood and setting when storytelling or in a production?

Purpose/ Aim: How does sound help us a theatre artists tell a story?

Materials: No materials need/ instruments optional if desired

Warm Up: Circle students up. Remind students of prior knowledge

- Setting vs. Mood and how they relate
- What are some theatrical elements that help create Mood?

...lighting and **SOUND**

-In what form do we utilize sound in theatre?

...Sound effects, Music, **Sounds cape**

Hook:

Creating The Sounds cape

- Facilitator may choose a setting or ask for suggestions from the class
- A setting will be agreed upon (example: Urban City)
- Students will be asked to pick a sound they might hear in this setting
- All students share their sound at the same time in a group (3...2...1...share)
- Individual students may share if desired

Main Activity:

Conducting the Sounds cape

- count off students in 1/2 or A/B style
- ask students to form two lines leaving space of “their windows”
- explain boiled down version of dynamics/ conducting

Point = start sound

Loud = conductor raises arms up

Soft = conductor lowers arms down

Cut Off = conductor gives a circular cut off with hands

- go through conducting once through as facilitator
- hand off to students to try
- encourage exploring dynamic range

Assessments can be based on:

- students ability to identify setting/ mood as it relates to a specific place through sound
- students willingness to participate in a ensemble based piece
- students respect for other artists in the room

Lesson 5: COSTUMES: Who are you wearing?

Central Question: How are costumes and theatrical wardrobe an indication of character and period?

Purpose/ Aim: How is what a character is wearing an indicator of who they are and where they are from?

Materials: a piece of fabric or scarf, a short story or fable preferably a period piece

Warm Up: After students complete their regular warm up “routine” students will circle up and play “This is a....” The idea of the game is to pass around a piece of fabric and each student states what it is. For example students could say “This is a cape/ sash/ dress.... And so on.”

Hook: Students will be asked to find a quiet spot in the room and close their eyes and listen to a story or fable. It should be a period piece. Facilitator should feel free to insert description of what the setting looks like and perhaps how people are

dressed. Facilitator may want to turn off the lights and put on music to help create the mood of the story.

Main Activity: Students will be handed out costume plot outlines and a character chart. Students will be asked to create a character that might have lived in their story. It can be a character that had been mentioned or one the student has created himself or herself. The students will be asked to create a brief bio but a very detailed costume plot

Reflection: Students will be asked to share their character and costume plot designs. This will also open the floor to questioning about how who their character is affected what they were wearing. Example: If a student chose to create a knight he perhaps would be wearing a suite of armor.

Lesson 6: COLOR: I see your true colors!

Central Question: How can students perception and interpretation of color help them make informed choices as young theatre artists?

Purpose/ Aim: What does color indicate to an audience?

Materials: different colored masks and fabric/ different color paper and markers

Warm Up: After students complete their regular warm up “routine” students will be asked to walk around the room where they will find different colors of paper taped to the wall. Each paper will have two columns. One will read “Character” and the other will read “Emotion” or “Mood.” Students will be asked to walk around and write on each color and in each column “What kind of characters might wear this color?” and “What does this color make you feel/ remind you of?”

Facilitator can end warm-up by reading out so responses with a brief discussion.

Hook: Facilitator will ask students to sit down and listen to a Greek fable/ story. The facilitator might want to read it twice to make sure all students understand the plot.

Main Activity: Students will be broken into groups and be assigned a character to dress up from the story with provided materials. After each group has finished their character. The facilitator will ask the actors to act out the story while it is read aloud again with fully dressed actors.

Reflection: Facilitator will lead a discussion on what it was like to watch the story come to life with actors dressed in character. Facilitator will also want to ask how the different colors effected how the audience perceived each character and how it effected each actor