

**Lesson Plan Title: Collaborative Scriptwriting**

**How can this lesson's Inherent content be based in a wide range of resources so that our students of color, students with disabilities, and other marginalized students are integral to the content?**

The inherent content of this lesson requires only a student's physical presence either seated or standing. No additional materials are required.

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**Description:** In this playwriting lesson, students identify the different elements of a story and through improvisation write a short scene from a fairy tale using a new perspective.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will be able to identify the different parts in story structure.

Students will be able to write a narrative summary using the different elements of story that could later be written into a script.

**Grade Levels:** 3<sup>rd</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> Grade

**2014 National Core Theatre Standards:**

**TH:Pr4.1.3.a** Apply the elements of dramatic structure to a story and create a drama/theatre work.

**TH:Pr4.1.4.a** Modify the dialogue and action to change the story in a drama/theatre work.

**TH:Pr4.1.5.a** Describe the underlying thoughts and emotions that create dialogue and action in a drama/theatre work.

**TH:Pr4.1.6.a** Identify the essential events in a story or script that make up the dramatic structure in a drama/theatre work.

**Time to Teach:** One 50-minute class period

**Materials Required for Instruction:** An empty space large enough to have everyone standing (or sitting) in a circle.

### **Opening:**

Ask the students to think of their favorite movies. Have them share their favorite movie with a shoulder partner. Then, ask them to share with their partner what about the movie do they like the most? Share out with the larger group some of the movies that were discussed. Explain to the students that each of these movies tell a story. Each story has similar parts. Ask the group, what are the parts of a story? On the board, write their responses and fill in any gaps. Parts of a story include: characters (, setting (location, time period), plot (beginning, middle and end), conflict (the problem), and resolution (how the problem is solved).

### **Instructional Procedures:**

**Step 1:** Tell the students that as a group we will create a story together, one word at a time.

**Step 2:** Explain how to do the activity ONE WORD STORY. Each student goes around the circle telling a story only by saying 1 word at a time. Students must keep in mind the different parts in a story that was just discussed characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution. The story can be fun, silly, & anything can happen, but it should maintain the structure of a story & make sense. Remind students that each word should be a “yes, and...,” building on the words already said & connecting thoughts to create a cohesive, flowing story. The story will end when the last two words are “The End.” If students are struggling with connecting the words as thoughts, ask them to repeat the previous words said before adding on their own until the sentence is finished. Then start a new repetition & continuation with the first word of the next sentence. All of the sentences are still part of one story, but this will help them with forming a better flow & story that makes sense. Adaptation: Instead of going around the circle, the story can also be told by tossing a ball around the circle. Whoever has the ball adds a word before tossing it to someone else.

**Step 3:** Debrief what was successful and what was challenging with the ONE WORD STORY activity. Have the students identify the different elements of the story – characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution – to the previous exercise. Explain to the students that we will now build on to our understanding of the different elements of story by doing a similar activity with new rules called FORTUNATELY/UNFORTUNATELY. This activity will help us practice build conflict and resolution in our story. Let’s try to retell the story that was just told but lets add additional plot events to build conflict and resolution.

**Step 4:** The first person who began the story initially begins telling the story again but this time they can use a complete sentence instead of one word. The next person in the circle continues the story, but they must begin their sentence with “Fortunately...” The next sentence by the next player must begin with “Unfortunately...” These two beginnings continue to alternate around the circle until the last person finishes the story with their sentence. Focus on maintaining a story line that makes sense with a beginning, middle, & end, even though they have the first word of their sentence. It is all about yes, and-

ing the previous person – not contradicting them, but finding a way to further develop the story based on what you have already been given.

**Step 5:** Debrief this version of the activity and compare/contrast the two versions of the story. Discuss what was the successes and challenges.

**Step 6:** Now that the students have a stronger understanding of the different elements of story. Explain to them that they are now going to put their knowledge to action by starting the first step of the process of writing a script.

**Step 7:** Many professional playwrights start the writing process of their script by writing something called a “narrative summary”. This means a short story where all 5 parts of a story are included. You will be working in groups to come up with the five different parts of the story. Divide the class into five groups.

**Step 8:** Group 1 will come up with at least 4-5 characters. They have to be related to each other in some manner (family members, co-workers, friends, etc.), but they can be any age, size, shape, ethnicity, etc. Encourage Group 1 to be as clear and detailed about their characters in any setting they choose.

**Step 9:** Groups 2, 3, and 4, in the meantime, create other settings. All groups need to work independently, so no one knows (except Group 1) who the characters are or where the other groups are going to place them. There can be additional characters in each group’s setting (hunters in a jungle, server in a diner, etc.).

**Step 10:** Finally, Group 5 must develop a reason why any group of characters might want to arrive at a destination of their choosing. If their setting is Grandma’s house, the reason for going there is to celebrate her birthday at a surprise party.

**Step 11:** You now have the foundation of the story of a journey that can be scripted into play form. The characters created by Group 1 have a destination and a reason for getting there, created by Group 5. In order to accomplish the goal of arriving there, they must travel through the settings created by Groups 2, 3, and 4—settings that may well have other characters with whom they must interact. Have each group share what they came up with and post on the board. Have the students return to an independent workspace.

**Step 12:** Working independently, ask the students to write their own narrative summary using the information created about characters and setting to include conflict and resolution. Each of them will be different.

**Step 13:** Once they write their summary, have them share their story with a partner. In a following class, they would begin to plan the dialogue. In a later activity, the students could improvise scenes from their summaries to explore creating dialogue.

**Assessment:**

Performance Task Rubric	Above Standard WOW!	At Standard RIGHT ON!	Approaching Standard KEEP GOING!	Below Standard LET ME HELP YOU
Character	Clearly describes what the character is thinking and feeling by including how other characters think and feel about the main character.	Clearly describes what the character is thinking and feeling.	Describes what the character does but not what he/she is feeling.	Names the character but needs to describe what he/she is doing and feeling.
Setting	The setting is described using figurative language and the reader discovers more about the characters and plot due to the connection with the setting of the story.	Clearly describes where the story takes place.	Names the place where the story is set but doesn't describe it.	Does not say where the story takes place.
Problem	The problem has a dramatic build of obstacles and complications that lead to a resolution.	Clearly describes the problem that the character has to overcome.	Mentions the problem but needs more details about why it's a problem.	Does not mention the problem.
Plot	The series of events are clearly organized and the events is sequenced following the plot diagram of rising and falling action.	Clearly organizes what happens as the character tries to deal with the problem.	One or more details are missing from the plot.	Many details are missing from the plot.
Resolution	Solution is logical, interesting and reveals universal themes that provide reflection on the problem, characters and given circumstances.	Solution is logical given the problem, circumstances, and characters.	Solution includes how the problem is solved but is not logical with the problem, given circumstances and characters.	Doesn't include how the problem is solved.

**Please use the space below for suggestions for any adaptations or accommodations for inclusion of special needs learners.**

Accommodations may include...

- displaying an agenda of activities for the class to help communicate the sequence of exercises.

Adaptations may include...

- movement that exists within the proximity of the seated area of the student.

**Please use the space below to list any suggestions for multi-cultural inclusions.**

To include multi-cultural perspectives, encourage the students to consider people that they have seen in their own cultures when they select their different parts of the story.

**Works Cited:**

Baltimore Center Stage Young Playwright's Festival Teacher's Handbook