

Imagining a Character's Inner Thoughts
An exploration of character for 5th grade
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shared by James Madison University

Stimulus Material: Play/Musical/Book: *James and The Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl

Connections to Play Themes, Characters, Setting, and/or Plot: This lesson connects to the characters and their emotions and how the idea of friendship allows the characters to grow and form leadership roles within their lives. This will allow the students to think about why the characters were portrayed the way they were and how they themselves can connect to the characters emotions.

DBP Strategies: (Engage) Cross the room if... (Explore) Role-On-The-Wall, Seated Statues

Time Needed: 50 Minutes

Materials Needed: Pen/paper (for role-on-the-wall)

Space Needs: A large classroom (open space)

Grade(s): 5th Grade

National Standards:

- **Creating:**
TH:Cr1.1.5.c. Imagine how a character's inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.
- **Performing:**
TH: Pr6.1.5.a. Present drama/theatre work informally to an audience.
- **Responding:**
TH: Pr7.1.5.a Justify responses based on personal experiences when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.
TH:Pr7.1.5 a. Explain personal reactions to artistic choices made in a drama/theatre work through participation and observation.

Essential Question(s): How can I relate to James?
How can I impact a friendship?

Enduring Understanding: Friendship's build trust and teamwork.

FACILITATION PLAN

Before the lesson begins we want to make sure that we create a drama contract with the students so that they know what is expected of them as well as what they expect from us. We want this to be a safe environment and especially since we are going to be up on our feet and sharing our ideas we want to make sure that our students know to be respectful of other students opinions. *“As a class we need to know that some of the ideas shared today might differ from our own and that’s totally okay and is encouraged! We don’t want other people’s’ opinions to change how we feel so make sure that whatever ideas you choose to share are your own”*.

Engage (15 minutes)

(Cross the Line If..)

Please make two lines (here and here), facing each other. Please leave some space in between one another.

We are going to do a strategy called “Cross the room if”. I am going to read a statement, two times. If you think about the statement and believe it is true about yourself and your experiences, after I read it the second time you will cross the room, joining the other side. After we go through all the questions we will reflect. Does everyone understand?

Let’s begin...

Cross the room if....

You have ever disagreed with a family member?

You have ever felt lonely?

Your friends have ever helped you step out of your comfort zone?

You have ever felt like a leader? (in your class, in society, in your friend group)

Side coaching:

- *There is no right or wrong answer in this strategy.*
- *This is about your own personal experiences. Don’t focus on what everyone else is doing*
- *It is okay to have different experiences or opinions than your classmates*

After completing the four statements have the students reflect and share about their reasons for crossing. Would anyone like to share why they crossed for a certain statement? Did anyone notice anything during the strategy in terms of when people crossed?

Transition: *As we move into the next part of the lesson let's continue to think about these statements. Consider how some of your experience may connect to those of the characters in James in the Giant Peach.*

Explore (30 minutes)

(Roll on the Wall)

The facilitator will draw a head and shoulders on a large poster in the front of the room, and will explain to the students that “*This is the main character within the play named James.*”

“What feelings and emotions do you all notice that James may have been feeling within this piece of dialogue below, and why do you think that?” Students will share and facilitator will write characteristics the students list on the poster itself inside the body of character.

“Now that we’ve talked about James’ feelings, can anyone list any factors surrounding James in this moment in the play; this can be other characters or environmental factors.”

Next the facilitator will share an excerpt from the story or play in which James' parents are eaten by the rhino. After the excerpt is shared, the facilitator will ask the students again to share their ideas and ask why they chose those factors, and how they relate to James' experience after his parents' death. The facilitator will write them on the outside of the poster.

Once that initial discussion has ended and everyone had gotten a chance to share the Facilitator will ask the students *"Looking at the feelings we just talked about how do you think these feelings changed after James has met his friends that live inside the peach and why do you think that?"* Students will then share their thinking and move onto reflection.

Transition: *Now that we have explored how James felt throughout this scene, we are going to explore and act out what occurred!*

(Seated statues)

Let's all sit in a circle with our chairs.

After reading the scene in our last activity we are now going to explore it further by allowing you all to take on different roles through vocal or physical movements. Think about specific emotions or actions that occurred in this scene you will shape your body into a frozen picture to show what that looks like.

Now when I say certain words from the text you all will make a statue you think correlates with it. I will count down "3-2-1 Freeze" and by then you should be in your image.

- "James found himself alone"
- "Giant rhinoceros"
- "Suddenly gotten eaten up"
- "Poor wittle Jamesy"
- "You'll be loved"

Side-coaching:

- Make sure to look at all of the other statues!
- How can you show me a frozen statue of how sad James is?
- I see a lot of low levels.
- How can you make sure to incorporate your facial expression?
- Look at all of the different ways to make a statue of the aunts loving James?

As needed, discuss the characters and events from this particular scene.

Thank you all for participating in seated statues! Now let's work through some questions!

Reflect (5 minutes)

D: *What did we do today to help us understand the themes within James and The Giant Peach?*

A: *What do you think that James learned during his time with his new friends inside the peach?*

R: *How do you think friendship can help you build trust?*

How do you think friendship can help you step out of your comfort zone?

Ending Statement: Building relationships with others can shape how you feel about yourself and can allow you to grow.