

Drama Lesson Ideas for P6 / P7

Warm up exercises

You may find this website by Gareth Pitchford useful for some warm up exercise ideas - [drama warm-ups](#)

Useful reading

Two useful books for background reading on drama exercises and tools for this form of work are:

Games for Actors and Non-Actors

by Augusto Boal (2nd edition, 2002) Routledge. Price £17.99

Games for Actors and Non-Actors was written by the founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal. It sets out the principles and practice of Boal's revolutionary method, showing how theatre can be used to transform and liberate everyone - actors and non-actors alike. This updated and substantially revised second edition includes: two new essays by Boal on major recent projects in Brazil; Boal's description of his work with the Royal Shakespeare Company; a revised introduction and translator's preface; a collection of photographs taken during Boal's workshops, specifically commissioned for this edition; and new reflections on Forum Theatre.

Structuring Drama Work - a handbook of available forms in theatre and drama

by Jonathan Neelands and Tony Goode (2000) Cambridge University Press. Price £17.99

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Structuring Drama Work is a handbook for teachers of Drama. This revised edition takes into account developments in the teaching of Drama over the ten years since the first edition was published, whilst maintaining the successful existing framework. The authors have developed about thirty new conventions in the categories of Context, Narrative, Poetic and Reflective Drama. The original conventions have also been expanded to increase the range offered. Examples illustrating new conventions, and adding to existing ones, come from a range of dramatic and literary forms, often touching on drama in its social context. There are therefore many opportunities to teach cultural connections, citizenship and personal and social development using the ideas in this handbook. A new preface complements the updated and expanded text. This book is reviewed by practitioners to be accessible and highly usable.

Session 1: Introduction to Sectarianism

[Breaking Down the Wall](#)

by Bruce Adam, Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication and Media Falkirk College

To find out more about when this play was first performed, go to www.ascol.org.uk. We would like to thank Bruce Adam for permission to reproduce his play for this website.

Session outline:

- Introduction - framing the session.
- Each activity has a time limit. This depends on the length of each lesson.
- The usage of sectarian words and the language used should be monitored. The use any sectarian word / slang must be based on the content of the subject.
- Teacher hands out the script from Bruce Adam for a short drama to introduce the main themes of sectarianism.
- Each child reads script. The teacher asks for volunteers to read the script aloud.
- Short discussion about the content.
- Children are split into small groups 'a read through' is done by each group.
- Children are asked to stand up to perform the drama within their groups.
- One group is chosen to perform to the class.
- Class discusses the performance, relationship of characters and the content of the drama.
- Teacher leads a short review of what has been learnt.
- Children are told that they will have to perform in groups a short drama about sectarianism for the last session of the series (the project). It will be their job to improvise and script the drama as the session progresses.

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Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lessons 1, 2, 3):

- Use movement and mime (M & M) - move inventively and appropriately in a given space.
- Using language - speak audibly and clearly, contribute to planning.
- Investigating - sustain fairly complex roles.
- Creating and designing - in response to the stimulus offer ideas which could be used to create the drama, going beyond the obvious stereotypes.

Extension activity

- Children jot down what they have done in their journal.
- Teachers may wish to consider if one of the targets could be to perform student scripts at morning school assembly as a way of raising anti-sectarian issues to the school.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of language and class dynamics - in particular, any use of sectarian slang or words should be within context of the lesson.
- The teacher is to gain trust of the children prior to the session and vice versa. Set up the classroom climate for positive interactions.

Session 2: The language of sectarianism

Session outline:

- Introduction - framing the session.
- Children are split into groups, depending on the month in which they were born.
- The different groups are asked to discuss terms like 'sectarian', 'religious intolerance', 'bigotry' and 'anti-sectarian' using the internet to research the topic.
- If time permits, children can move on to conduct a fact-finding exercise in major religions and beliefs. Again, the anti-sectarian website has useful links which can help.
- In a large circle, the groups report back and share what they've found. Key findings are outlined.
- Children split into their groups to work on their projects (from session 1).

Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lessons 1, 2, 3):

- Movement and mime (M & M) - move inventively and appropriately in a given space.
- Using language - speak audibly and clearly, contribute to planning.
- Investigating - sustain fairly complex roles.
- Creating and designing - in response to the stimulus offer ideas which could be used to create the drama, going beyond the obvious stereotypes.

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Extension activity

- Children jot down what they have done in their journal.
- Teacher suggests to the class that some of the work can be used in morning school assembly.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of stereotypes, sectarian / racist language and attitudes.

Session 3: Exploring sectarianism: case studies

Session outline:

- Recap of previous lesson.
- Newspaper articles that raise the issues of sectarianism are passed around the class. (**See Health Warning below**) Children read and discuss their feelings about the stories. (Scottish newspaper websites can be found at: www.onlinenewspapers.com)
- Using the newspaper articles groups act out the stories to the class.
- Children then mime (act out without using words) the same stories to the class. This is designed to highlight the subtleties of the situations.
- In a large circle children discuss whether mime or dialogue was a more powerful means of communicating the issues.
- Each group picks a tableau (a still picture to represent one scene) from their drama to highlight the main issue of their story to the class.
- The class discusses what they have performed and observed.
- The teacher leads a discussion on the events in the newspaper articles, how the people behaved and what has been learnt so far about sectarianism.
- Children split into groups to work on their projects.

Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lessons 1, 2, 3):

- Movement and mime (M & M) - move inventively and appropriately in a given space.
- Using language - speak audibly and clearly, contribute to planning.
- Investigating - sustain fairly complex roles.
- Creating and designing - in response to the stimulus offer ideas which could be used to create the drama, going beyond the obvious stereotypes.

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Extension activity

- Children jot down what they have done in their journal.
- Teacher suggests to the class that some of the work can be used in morning school assembly.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be careful when selecting media stories for re-enactment that young people do not focus purely on the 'gory' and 'violent' aspects, e.g. who can be the most violent dramatically, thus losing the overall point of the exercise.
- Be aware of language and class dynamics particularly in relation to perpetuating sectarian prejudice and religious intolerance.
- The teacher is to gain trust from pupils prior to the session and vice versa.

Session 4: Characterisation and Sectarianism

Session outline:

- Recap of previous lesson.
- Pupils explore the roles of the protagonist, any followers and the victim in the newspaper article. There will be a need to select an article about sectarianism that lends itself to this exercise. The possible history of each character, including their family, is discussed.
- In groups the children jot down how they imagine a day in the life of the above, from the moment they wake up to the moment they go to sleep. This includes details about their influences, friends, family, work, pastimes and other interactions.
- The children follow the various emotions of the characters.
- The children choose one member of the group to become the protagonist. The protagonist is hot-seated by the others to fully understand their emotions and feelings.
- The children then choose another member to become the victim, who is hot-seated in the same manner. This is repeated for any followers involved in the story.
- The teacher monitors the class dynamics and guides the children to the next section.
- The characters then face each other for an 'in-role' debate facilitated by the teacher.
- The teacher reiterates that the children are in-role.
- The teacher concludes the session with a discussion about what has been learnt about sectarianism and characterisation, and how this will be of use to them for the project.

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Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lesson 4):

- Develop reading skills, research note-taking (newspaper articles).
- M & M - movement appropriately in space.
- Investigating - use language in movement, space and other resources in new and invented ways.
- Using language - show awareness of audience.

Extension activity

- Pupils jot down what they have done in their journal.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of class dynamics.
- The teacher needs to be able to move freely around the class to support each individual.
- Be aware of language.
- Create a positive atmosphere.

Session 5: The reality

Session outline:

- Recap of previous lesson.
- The teacher has two options for teaching this lesson.
- (The teacher chooses which option depending on the confidence of the class and teacher to handle the briefing after the Tunnel exercise. In classes where children may have real day-to-day experience of overt sectarianism Option 1 might be a touch too close to the bone. Some children might understand the true nature of being on the receiving end of sectarian bullying therefore sensitivity is required in the choice of options.)

Option 1 - The reality

- Children are asked to walk around the space and sit down. The children are asked to adopt a role with a certain prejudice from the work covered so far. They are then asked to close their eyes and think of one sentence 'in-role' that would be upsetting to another person of a different group.
- Once they have a sentence they are asked to stand up at the count of three and say their sentence with emotion (pupils may be upset by this so take time to prepare them at the beginning that this is a lesson about harsh issues).
- Next, the children are asked to mime their sentences, in order to emphasise the subtleties of the issue (associated body language, facial expressions).
- The children are then asked to form a 'tunnel of abuse' - they stand in a straight line, with another line facing them. The remaining children are then asked to walk through the tunnel whilst the children in the lines speak out their sentences. The children then change places and repeat the exercise.

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Option 2 - The concept.

- The teacher asks the children to sit down, close their eyes and think about what they have studied so far in the previous lessons.
- Think about the effects of sectarianism.
- Focus on the language that is used.
- Focus on the body language and the actions taken.
- You are a passer-by and witness to an incident. What role do you honestly play?
- Children discuss and jot down their ideas, views etc.
- After this, ask for feedback and provide a debriefing. This is a tough subject and you respect that children may have found the lesson difficult - but this is a daily reality for some people!
- Children split into groups to work on their projects.

Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lesson 5):

- Develop reading skills, research note-taking (newspaper articles).
- M & M - movement appropriately in space.
- Investigating - use language in movement, space and other resources in new and invented ways.
- Using language - show awareness of audience.

Extension activity

- Children jot down what they have done in their journal.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of language and class dynamics.
- Be aware of time on each activity.
- Be free to move around the classroom after the exercise to create harmony.
- Make sure there is a proper de-briefing after the 'tunnel' exercise.

Session 6: Characterisation and Sectarianism 2

Session outline:

- Recap of previous lesson.
- Children are split into four groups: 1 the protagonists; 2 the followers; 3 the victims; and 4 teachers who witnessed the event.
- The above discuss the 'tunnel of abuse' event.
- The protagonist and followers are suspended for a week.
- The protagonists discuss why they did what they did and whether the repercussions were worth it.
- The followers discuss why they joined in and what they got out of it.
- The teachers discuss what they think of the event.
- The children adopt the role of a group of councillors and discuss ways in which it might be possible to help the various characters.
- Children split into groups to work on their projects.

Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lesson 6):

- Creating - in response to the stimulus offer ideas which could be used to create the drama.
- Communicating and presenting - suggest ways of presenting the drama. Portray characters in accordance with decisions taken.
- Language - speak audibly and clearly.

Extension activity

- Children jot down what they have done in their journal.
- Teacher suggests to the class that some of the work can be used in morning school assembly.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of language and class dynamics.
- The teacher is to gain trust from pupils prior to the lesson and vice versa.

Session 7: Behaviour, Friendship and Sectarianism

Session outline:

- Recap of previous session.
- The children are split into three groups. A scenario is set of a group of friends that are going out somewhere together: 1 is going to a football match; 2 is going to a party; and 3 is going to the city.
- One member of each group is chosen. He or she holds religious views towards others and other religious groups.
- Should the group stick by the friend, or challenge their views?
- The three groups create three scenes each: 1 - telling the protagonist that they are not going out; 2 - meeting of the protagonist at the destination; 3 - what happens the following day when they meet in school.
- Group discussions - ask the group for feedback. What are the new discoveries? What was achieved?
- Children are split into groups to work on their projects and teacher reviews progress.

Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lesson 7):

- Creating and developing - identify new ways of using drama inventively.
- M & M - move appropriately in the given space.
- Sustain complex roles.
- Language - justify decisions.

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Extension activity

- Pupils jot down what they have done in their journal.
- Teacher suggests to the class that some of the work can be used in morning school assembly.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of stereotypes, language and class dynamics.
- Be able to move around freely in class.
- Be able to listen to the children.

Session 8: Young People and Sectarianism

Session outline:

- Recap of previous lesson.
- Discussion on how the pressures that face young people might lead them into sectarianism - peer pressure, bullies etc.
- Still images of important points indicated in the discussion are projected to the class by small groups.
- Brief review of these pressures by the teacher.
- Children split into groups to work on their projects.

Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lesson 8):

- Communication - suggest ways of presenting drama and portray characters in accordance with decisions taken.
- Investigation - sustain fairly complex roles, contribute to planning.
- Understanding - justify decisions taken.

Extension activity

- Children jot down what they have done in their journal.
- Teacher suggests to the class that some of the work can be used in morning school assembly.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of language and class dynamics.
- The teacher is to gain trust from Children prior to the lesson and vice versa.

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Session 9: Too late to change?

Session outline:

- Recap of previous lesson.
- Teacher in role as child whose friend is a sectarianist troublemaker.
- Teacher narrates dialogue to the class. Dialogue includes how the teacher in role as child feels and what they feel they should do. E.g. 'My pal Jonny and I were walking in the park when we saw a group of lads. They were wearing football tops and all of a sudden he started shouting abuse and hurling things at 'em. Next thing you know, they started chasin' us. We hid behind a car and they lost us. It was close. The trouble is, this is not the first time it has happened and it's only a matter of time before he gets himself really hurt ... What should I do?'
- Class gives the teacher advice about what actions he / she should take.
- Class finishes work on projects.

Session 10: Project Performances

Session outline:

- Children perform their short drama about sectarianism to the rest of the class.
- The teacher leads a discussion about all the lessons on sectarianism in the series. What has been learnt? How can we try and resolve these problems to be better citizens?

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Learning Outcomes - by the end of the session children will (lesson 9):

- Using language - contribute to planning - offer ideas, use language inventively and appropriately and justify decisions.
- Investigation - sustain fairly complex roles - use language / movement, and other resources in new and inventive ways.
- M & M - move appropriately in a given space. Use movement inventively and appropriately.

Extension activity

- Children jot down what they have done in their journal.
- Teacher suggests to the class that some of the work can be used in morning school assembly.

HEALTH WARNING!

- Be aware of language and class dynamics.
- The teacher is to gain trust from children prior to the lesson and vice versa.