

## AEP Theatre - Mod/Sev

### Lesson 5 - Creating Character

#### CALIFORNIA ARTS STANDARDS

##### K.TH:Cr2

- a. With prompting and supports, interact with peers and contribute to dramatic play or a guided drama experience.

##### SDUSD Theatre Critical Concepts

Theatre Making: Acting; Theatre Making: Technical Theatre

#### OBJECTIVE(S)

- I can pretend to be a character and pantomime an action.

#### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

- pantomime
- character
- costume
- prop

#### INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- [Slide Deck](#)
- [People in Your Neighborhood Video](#)
- Costume Vests

Recommended reading:

- [https://www.ssess.ie/sites/default/files/Resources/Cirricular\\_Material/P\\_SeV\\_Drama.pdf](https://www.ssess.ie/sites/default/files/Resources/Cirricular_Material/P_SeV_Drama.pdf)

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#### TEACHER TIPS

- Use the slide deck as you need it. The best reason to use slides is addressing diverse learning styles.
- Tailor the lesson to your students and your strengths but meet the objective.
- Mind your pacing and total time.
- Read the room. If students need more time, allow it. If they are quick to pick up or something isn't working, move on.
- Students may show engagement in a variety of ways. Allow students to experience the lesson and access theatre in any way that works for them.

#### LESSON PREAMBLE

*Working with students with moderate or severe special needs requires a different approach to teaching theatre. As you read the lesson, consider the following lenses.*

- *Achieving a standard is not the primary objective of the lesson. Theatrical experiences enrich all lives. The lesson has focus concepts, but the purpose is to make a theatrical connection with each student - and the connection may be different for each student.*
- *Small classes mean we can engage and interact with each student individually. That takes time, and that's okay!*
- *Every class is different. Feel free to extend parts of the lesson that work and skip parts that do not.*

- Theatre can assist students in social, academic, and developmental goals, from social skills and emotional regulation to math or literacy. These parts of the lessons are important, too.
- It is important to ask questions, even if students do not answer. They may be thinking.
- Even if it feels like you are performing for them rather than teaching, success is measured by student smiles, physical responses, or a few minutes of participation!

Please note: Routine is important, so this lesson is organized differently from standard AEP lessons.

## WARM UP

(Engage students, access prior learning, review, hook or activity to focus the student for learning)

### Part 1: Greeting (5 minutes) (text in bold are examples of what the teacher says to the class)

1. Introduce yourself to the class- *you will push into M/S classes*. Include your pronouns.
2. Touch base with the other educators in the room - let them know any prep or special things you need them to work on. For this lesson, ask them to assist students with the motions, lead a center, and participate to model the work.
3. Share the agenda (slide deck)
4. **“Welcome to Theatre class! Let’s sing a song together.”**
5. Lead class in “If You’re Happy and You Know It” using “clap your hands”, “shout hurrah!” and “be a cat (meow)”. This has them use their actor tools straight away: voice, body and imagination.
  - a. Sing the song slowly
  - b. Assist students in participating (along with their paras) at their comfort level
  - c. If appropriate sing it a second time
6. **“What fun! Remember, in this class you are actors. Everyone say, actor. An actor is a person who tells a story onstage.”**
7. **“Actors, we are going to have lots of fun together in theatre class!”**
8. Review the Arts Smarts Rules and [sing the song](#).
9. **One of our rules is to be kind. One way we are kind is by practicing our listening skills. I’m going to teach you an attention getter routine. This is something we will use every time we need to all be listening at the same time.** Teach attention getter of *your choice*. Be specific in how you want students to respond. Use consistently, whenever appropriate. Routine is your friend. [Find your best fit or a new idea for attention getters here.](#)

### Part 2: Warmup (5 minutes)

**“Now let’s get to work! Today we will work with the actor’s tools, emotions and facial expressions.”**

1. As much as possible, assemble students in a semi-circle.
  2. Set the objective for the lesson. “I can pretend to be a character and pantomime an action”
  3. **“Actor’s point to your face.”**
  4. **“Who can tell me what an emotion is? Let’s name some emotions.”** If possible, write a list of emotions that students identify.
  5. Remind students of the actor’s tools; **voice, body and imagination**. **“Let’s all say those tools. Repeat after me. Voice. Body. Imagination. Good job! Let’s do that again and add a gesture to each word. A gesture is a movement you make to show meaning. Mimic or copy me. Voice** (put fingers to mouth and then extend arm). **Body** (put arms at sides and then run hands up side of body extending arms fully to the sky). **Imagination** (put pointer fingers on temples and then extend hands out to the side with wiggly fingers.)”
- Repeat this once or twice more. Show the poster/slide.
10. **“Let’s warm up our voice. Everyone hum.”**
    - Practice humming. Hum in a high pitch, hum in a low pitch.

- **“And let’s eat from our Marshmallow tree.”** Students pantomime picking a small marshmallow off of a tree, put it in their mouth, chew making “mmm” sound, swallow loudly. Repeat 3 more times, each time the marshmallow getting larger.
- **“Let’s do some tongue twisters.”** Repeat a tongue twister word by word. Big. Black. Bug. x3 Purple. Peanut. Butter. x3

**11. “Now, let’s warm up our bodies.”**

- Stand in actor neutral, or a simple relaxed position. Put your right hand and arm in front of you. **Gently shake** it while counting to three. Same with the left hand and arm. Repeat with right leg and foot and left leg and foot. Gently shake your whole body and say “Oh that feels so good.”
- Make your body as **big** as possible. Make your body as **small** as possible (grape and raisin). x3
- Give yourself a **big hug** and squeeze tightly for 5 - 10 seconds.

**Part 3: Introductions (5 minutes)** *Skip this as appropriate*

1. Explain that the student actors are going to practice introducing themselves. This exercise will use two of the actor’s tools; body and voice.
  - Ask all students to simultaneously say the sentence frame “Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ (insert their name).”
  - **“Here are the rest of the instructions. You will take two steps into the circle, say “Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.” while you make a circle with your arm. Then you will take two steps back to your place in the circle.”**
  - Demonstrate for the student actors and then go around the circle having each one complete the task.

NOTE: The circle with the arm should use the arm, fully extended, and it should cross the entire body. By doing this, it activates both sides of the brain helping students be ready to learn. Allow students to approach this work as they are comfortable. Help them move their bodies if appropriate. Make sure each student has some time to feel seen and heard.

1. **“Good work, actors!”**

NOTE: Be sure to use gender neutral terms when addressing the class, such as actors, class, team.

**Part 4: Review Pantomime (5 minutes)**

1. **“During our warm up, how did you use your body?”** Repeat student replies and ask clarifying questions.
2. Remind students that last time they worked on pantomime. **“When we pantomime we tell a story with our bodies but no talking. Let’s pantomime together. Let’s pantomime brushing our teeth.”**
3. Lead a pantomime of brushing teeth, encouraging students to follow along and explore each part of the pantomime slowly.
4. Remind students that in the last lesson they pantomimed actions and they also pantomimed characters.

## LESSON

*(Presentation of new material, demonstration of the process, direct instruction, Application of knowledge, problem solving, corrective feedback)*

### Part 1(20 minutes)

1. **“Let’s talk more about characters. Do you know what a character is? Actors play characters in stories. They pretend to be someone else. Let’s [watch this video](#) that shows some of the characters that can exist in your neighborhood.”**
2. Debrief about the video. Ask students who were the characters the puppet actors became.
3. Point out to the students that the puppet actors use two things to become the characters. Props and costumes. Explain that a prop is something that the character holds or uses. The mail carrier used a bag as a prop to carry the mail. Explain that a costume is what the character wears. The mail carrier wore a specific hat that let everyone know they are a mail carrier.
4. **“We have some costumes for you to try! A costume is what an actor wears to become a character.”** Show students the costume vests and let each one choose one to wear. If they cannot put the vests on, have them drape them across their bodies or use clips to hold to their clothing.
5. **“Okay, here’s the exciting part. You are now this character! You are going to say what character you are and something your character might do. Then you will pantomime that action. For example, you might be an artist. You will say “I’m an artist and I paint pictures.” Then you will pantomime using your paintbrush. Let’s take turns and we’ll help you!”**
6. As you give the instructions above, demonstrate physically and speak slowly.
7. Go around the room and give each student the opportunity to perform. Encourage the other students to applaud and have the actor take a bow.
8. Give positive side coaching and feedback about what the student did to demonstrate character.

## CLOSING

*(Identify problems encountered, ask and answer questions, discuss solutions and learning that took place, did students meet outcomes?)*

### Part 1 (2 minutes)-Reflection

Assemble students in a semi-circle

- I can pretend to be a character. I was \_\_\_\_\_. (character they created)
- I can pantomime a character’s action. I acted out my character \_\_\_\_\_. (action: painting)
- I am an actor!

### Part 2 (3 minutes) Breathing and Mindfulness

(Use the dialogue below or follow video)

**“Actors, thank you for working so hard today. I’m excited to work with you again next time! Give yourself a big hug!**

*(A 10-second hug a day may fight infections, boost your immune system, ease depression, and lessen fatigue. Wrapping your arms around yourself sends a strong message to your body and your brain: I’ve got you, I love you, and you are okay.)*

**Before we go we are going to relax a little. This is called three breaths. Please stand, sit or lie down to be comfortable. Put one hand on your heart and one on your belly button. Now close your eyes. Take in a deep breath, imagine you are smelling beautiful flowers, and then slowly let that breath out. Do that again. Take a deep breathe in, and relax your mind. Breathe out. One more time. Take a deep breathe in, and relax your body. Breath out.**

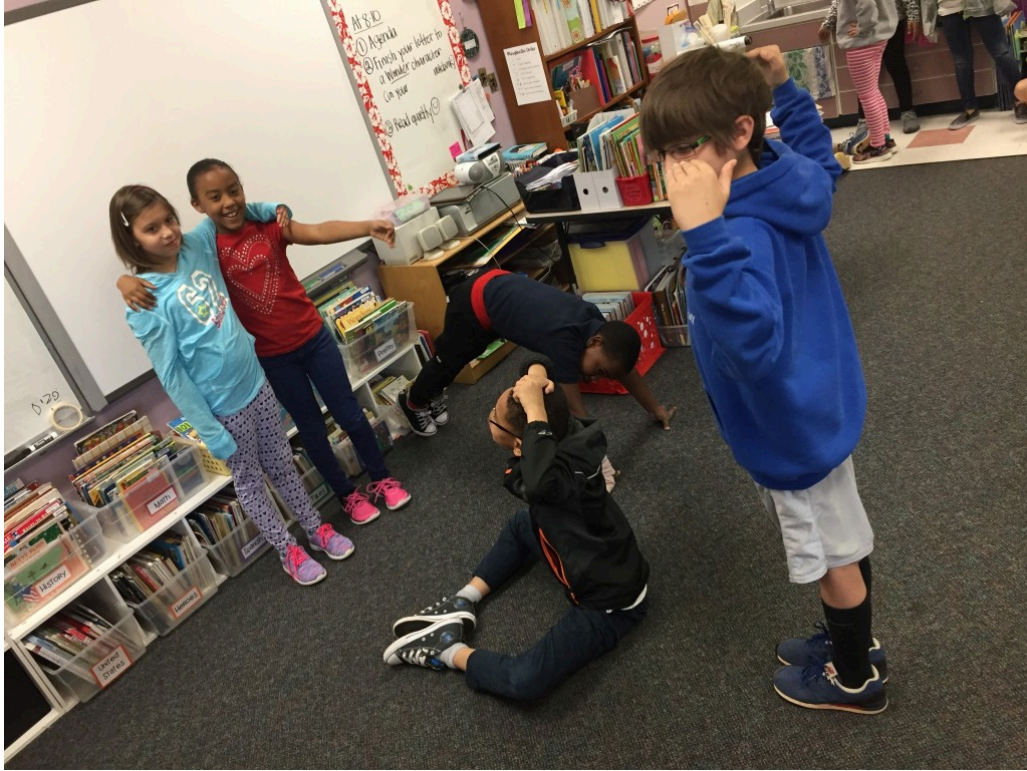
**With your hand on your heart, gently pat your heart 10 times.**

**(This action helps students calm down and feel safe)**

**Open your eyes and focus on being relaxed.**

**Thank you for breathing with me. Keep that sense of calm and focus as you move to your next class.”**

Use this “three breath” routine whenever the class needs to be refocused.



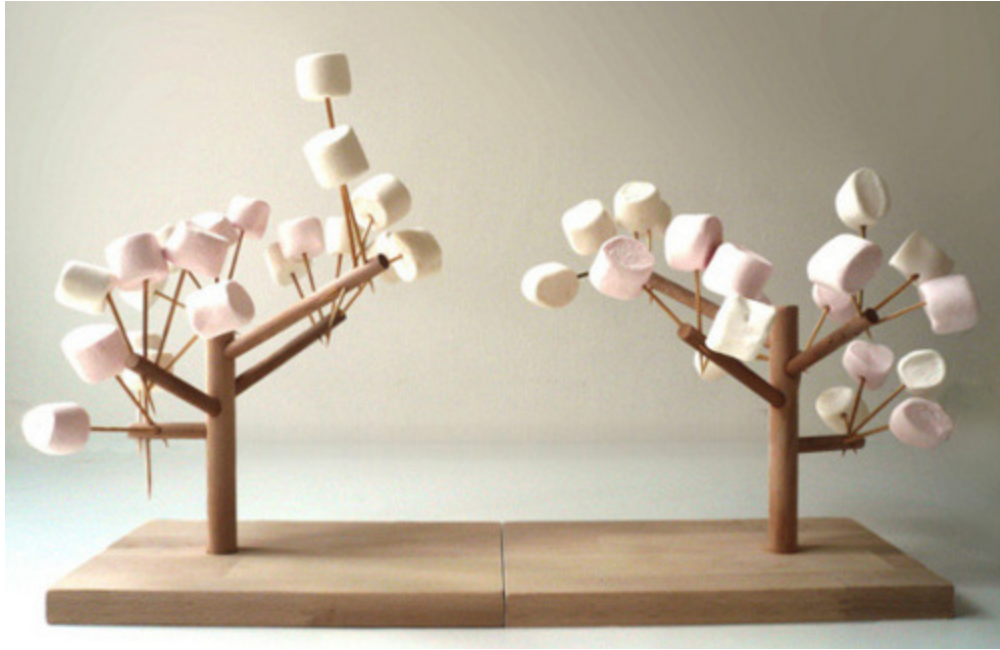
# Actor's Tools

- Voice
- Body
- Imagination





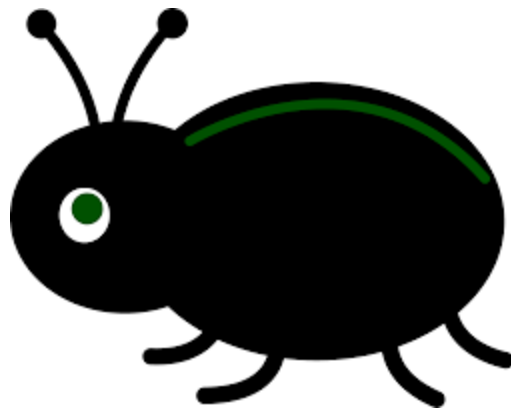
# Humming



## Imaginary Marshmallow Tree



# Big, black bug



# Purple peanut butter





# Actor Neutral



Shake your arm



Shake your leg



Hug  
yourself



# Arts Education Project



<b>Date:</b>	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Discipline:</b>
<b>Teacher:</b>		Theatre
<b>VAPA Teacher:</b>	<b>Room #:</b>	<b>Lesson #:</b> M/S 5 - Creating Character
<b>Lesson Objective(s):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can pretend to be a character and pantomime an action.</li> </ul>		
<b>Academic Vocabulary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pantomime</li> <li>character</li> <li>costume</li> <li>prop</li> </ul>		
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