

GRASSHOPPER



Stage Stars: From Script to Spotlight

1 hour · 1st – 8th · After School · Teacher: Lara Rigores

Instructions: This lesson plan is your starting point — feel free to edit, rearrange, or customize it to fit your teaching style and your students' needs! These notes are yours. They will not be published anywhere.

Topics Covered

Script Analysis · Blocking & Movement · Character Development · Voice & Projection · Ensemble Collaboration · Performance Skills

Lesson Plan

1. Warm-Up Circle (10 min)

- Lead the group in 'Zip Zap Zop' passing energy around the circle with gestures and eye contact
- Guide 'Body Part Leader' exercise where students walk around and a different body part leads (nose, elbow, knee) to explore physical awareness
- Practice projection with 'Echo Canyon' where one student speaks a line and others repeat it louder across the room
- End with 'Shake It Out' counting down from 8 shaking each limb to release tension

2. Skill Building Exercise (15 min)

- Introduce the focus skill for the week (blocking, character voice, emotional choices, etc.) with clear demonstration
- Set up 'Tableau Practice' where groups of 3-4 freeze in scenes showing beginning, middle, end of a simple scenario
- Run 'Partner Mirrors' where pairs mirror each other's movements to build connection and awareness
- Guide 'Emotion Walk' where students cross the room embodying different feelings while saying their character's name

3. Scene Work Session (25 min)

- Divide into scene groups (2-4 students per scene) and distribute age-appropriate script excerpts with highlighted lines
- Work with each group for 3-5 minutes providing direction on blocking, positioning them in specific stage areas (downstage, upstage, center)
- Have groups practice 'the moment before' by discussing and acting out what happened right before their scene begins
- Coach projection and diction as groups rehearse, reminding them to face the audience and speak to the back wall
- Encourage adding physical gestures that match dialogue and exploring different line delivery choices

4. Run-Through & Feedback (8 min)

- Have each group perform their scene segment while others serve as audience, sitting in designated viewing area
- Use 'Glow & Grow' feedback structure: ask audience for one thing that 'glowed' (went well) and one suggestion to 'grow'
- Give specific praise focusing on blocking choices, character voice, or teamwork
- Have performers take a formal bow and lead audience in applause

5. Closing Circle (2 min)

- Gather in circle and have each student share one word about how they're feeling or one thing they learned
- Preview next week's focus and remind about any lines to practice at home
- End with group theater chant: 'We are actors, strong and true, we work together, me and you!'

Materials Checklist

- ☐ Printed script excerpts for each scene group (8-10 copies)
- ☐ Highlighters in different colors for marking lines
- ☐ Painter's tape to mark stage areas on floor
- ☐ Small props basket (hats, scarves, simple hand props)
- ☐ Clipboard with character/blocking notes
- ☐ Timer or phone for managing segments
- ☐ Wireless speaker for entrance/exit music (optional)

☐ Parent performance invitations (for Week 7 distribution)

Age Adaptations

Younger Kids: Use scripts with 2-4 line scenes featuring repetitive language and physical comedy. Focus heavily on blocking and movement rather than memorization. Allow students to hold scripts during run-throughs. Use more imaginative play-based warm-ups like animal movements. Assign scene partners strategically, pairing confident readers with emerging ones. Keep given circumstances simple (you lost your toy, you're scared of the dark).

Older Kids: Use longer scenes (10-15 lines) with more complex dialogue and subtext. Expect full memorization by Week 5-6. Introduce stage terminology (upstage, stage left, cross, counter-cross). Discuss character motivation and relationships in depth. Allow students to make blocking suggestions and experiment with interpretation. Incorporate improv elements where they add their own lines. Give individual character work assignments between sessions.

Movement Break

Theater Freeze Dance: Play upbeat music and have students dance expressively as different characters (royal prince, sneaky villain, shy mouse, brave hero). When music stops, call out an emotion and students freeze in a statue showing that feeling. After 5-10 freezes, end with everyone doing their character's signature pose.

Bonus Activities

- Improvisation Games: Play 'Yes, And' scenes where partners build a story by accepting and adding to each offer
- Character Hot Seat: One student sits as their character and others ask questions they must answer in character
- Stage Combat Basics: Teach safe fake slaps, trips, or sword fighting choreography for interested students
- Backstage Crew Roles: Let early finishers design simple set pieces, create props from recyclables, or work on costume ideas

Series Outline (8 Weeks)

Week	Theme	Key Activities
1	Welcome to the Stage: Theater Foundations	Introductions through theater name games (Dramatic Name Game, Character Walk), Teach stage directions and basic terminology with movement across taped floor grid, Assign scene partners and distribute first scripts with simple dialogue, Begin blocking for opening positions and basic crosses
2	Finding Your Voice:	Voice warm-ups focusing on breath support, articulation exercises (tongue twisters), and volume control, Practice scenes emphasizing clear diction

Week	Theme	Key Activities
	Projection & Expression	and speaking to the back wall, Explore different vocal choices for characters (pitch, pace, tone), Work on moment before exercise for each scene
3	Body Language: Physical Characterization	Movement warm-ups exploring how characters walk, sit, gesture differently, Refine blocking with specific physical character choices, Practice entrances and exits with character energy, Add character-specific gestures and reactions to scenes
4	Emotional Exploration: Acting from the Inside Out	Emotion exercises exploring how feelings change voice and body, Discuss given circumstances and relationships for each scene, Work on connecting emotionally to character motivations, Practice scenes with different emotional tactics and see what works best
5	Memorization & Polish: Off Book Work	Share memorization techniques (repetition, recording, partner practice), Run scenes without scripts, allowing students to call 'line' when needed, Focus on smooth transitions and connecting with scene partners, Tighten timing and clean up blocking details
6	Ensemble Building: Working Together	Group warm-ups emphasizing trust and collaboration, Practice curtain call and group bows, Run full show sequence with all scenes in order for first time, Work on supporting each other as audience members and backstage between scenes
7	Tech & Dress Rehearsal	Add any simple costumes, props, or set pieces students have prepared, Practice full show with entrances from offstage area and proper exits, Run-through with minimal stops, taking notes for corrections, Distribute performance invitations and discuss performance day expectations
8	Showtime: Final Performance Celebration	Pre-show warm-up focusing on calming nerves and energizing ensemble, Welcome parents and caregivers, perform full show with all scenes, Group curtain call and individual scene bows, Celebration circle reflecting on growth and favorite moments from the series



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