

WHOOOPENSOCKER!

Multimedia Collection Educator Guide

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What Is Whoopensocker?

"Whoopensocker" is an old Wisconsin word that means "Something extraordinary of its kind." For us, Whoopensocker is an arts-integration program that uses improv and theater as tools to teach creative writing. Through games, writing, and performance, students realize how extraordinary their ideas are.

Learning Goals

By using Whoopensocker collection resources, learners in your space will:

- **Build Confidence:** Take creative risks in a safe environment and grow a writing voice.
 - **Write:** Author unique stories inspired by play and collaboration.
 - **Celebrate:** Share accomplishments and keep trying new things.
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Academic Standards Supported

[Wisconsin English Language Arts Standards](#): W.4.1, W.4.2, SL.2.1, SL.2.2, SL.2.3, SL.2.4, SL.4.4

Resource Framework

Whoopensocker video resources model arts-based practices that encourage learners to take risks in learning to write. They are designed to scaffold risk-taking using the "gradual release of responsibility model" (Fisher & Frey, 2013): *I do, we do, you do*.

- **I do** - warm up and activity lead
- **We do** - collaborative story making and performance
- **You do** - individual writing and sharing

[The videos in this collection](#) will help you bring these practices into your learning space!

- **Welcome to Whoopensocker** introduces the teaching artists and program.
 - **The Agreements** set the stage for self-expression and collaboration.
 - **Warm-up games** help students feel comfortable sharing their own ideas and supporting one another's ideas.
 - **Brainstorming and Scriptwriting** model structured support to generate ideas and place them into a narrative. The brainstorming video also shows how engaging and fun it can be when students perform the story they wrote together.
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Using the Resources

There are many right ways to put this into practice:

As a 90-minute lesson

1. Opening ritual/Agreements (10 minutes)
2. Warm-ups (10 minutes)
3. Brainstorm (15 minutes)
4. Group story writing and rehearsal (15 minutes)
5. Performance (10 minutes)
6. Individual writing and sharing (30 minutes)

As several short lessons (30 minutes)

Here are some suggestions for shorter lessons, but feel free and be brave in creating your own creative combinations! Remember to scaffold learners by setting expectations (Agreements), building a community of collaborators (warm-ups), and celebrating through sharing.

Lesson 1: Agreements (5), Warm-up (5), Brainstorm (20)

Lesson 2: Agreements (5), Warm-up (5), Group story writing (20)

Lesson 3: Agreements (5), Warm-up (5), Group story rehearsal (10), Whoopensocker Theater Performance (10)

As creative sparks (10-15 minutes)

Resources like the Agreements video and the warm-up games can be integrated into any space you have that works to build community and collaboration, like a morning meeting!

Teaching Tips

Setting the stage for every idea:

It takes bravery and humility to uphold “Every idea is a good idea.” Together, let’s make space for students to lead the way through their own ideas and self-expression.

- Whoopensocker Agreements are:
 - Every idea is a good idea and every idea can be revised.
 - Support each other’s ideas.
 - Respect yourself and others.
 - Keep the peace.
 - Respect the magic sign.
- Using the Whoopensocker Agreements to differentiate expectations between regular classroom time and Whoopensocker time can support the transition to and from whatever world has been created in the extraordinary minds of your students. For example, where fart jokes in science class are not appropriate, fart jokes during Whoopensocker are ok!
- “Every idea is a good idea” includes acknowledging all ideas expressed by students and appreciating the bravery it takes to share an idea, even if it necessitates redirection after the initial “Yes!”, as “Every idea can be revised.”
- Consider individual writing time as uncensored time. If a student feels interested and/or entertained by scary or violent topics and finds them entertaining, it’s okay to make space

for that exploration that feels safe. The next Stephen King, Jordan Peele, or Mary Shelley, has to start somewhere!

Scaffolding risk-taking & building collaboration through play

Warm-up games support each student's mind and body focus and more! Games are low-stakes ways for students to ... use their voice! ... make choices! ... make mistakes! ... affirm each other's ideas! ... work together to achieve a goal!

Pass the Clap: This game focuses individuals' concentration and encourages connections between students building community by achieving a goal together.

To play:

- First, create a circle.
- One person begins the clap with their neighbor, both clapping at the same time by making eye contact or looking at the other person's hands.
- After the neighbor CATCHES the clap, they pass it to their neighbor, with whom they clap at the same time.
- The process continues around the circle until the leader makes the last catch of the clap.
- Practice for speed and accuracy, allowing participants to have a safe space to make mistakes.
- Have a timed round each time you play the game to track improvement.

Variations: Once the ultimate time has been achieved, consider variations to the game:

1. Add a second clap after the first clap gets going in the same direction.
2. Add a second clap after the first clap gets going in the opposite direction.
3. Allow students to change the direction of the clap (catch the clap, pass the clap back to the person who just gave it to them or the person to the other side of them.)
4. Allow students to pass the clap across the circle! Make a connection with the person to send it to by making eye contact or directing your hands in their direction to pass it.

Sushi: This call-and-response game provides a low-risk space for students to make mistakes (we don't play with "outs") and an overall space for communal joy.

To play:

- Pick a leader!
- The leader reviews each number with the word/s and/or actions associated with them:
 - 1: Clap!
 - 2: Students say "Sushi!", lift their knee, and cross their arms over the lifted knee.
 - 3: Students say "Waffles!" while lifting one arm next to their head. Optional: add a side hip action.
 - 4: Students say "Point at the Door!" while pointing at a door in the space.
 - 5: Students say "Show time!" while bending down and making jazz hands next to their face
- The leader calls the numbers in a random order, and students respond with word/s and/or actions associated with those numbers. Hilarity ensues.

Variations: We find that this game hardly ever gets old for leaders or participants! But, if you need a new challenge, consider variations to the game:

1. Change the pace: fast is fun, irregular really gets challenging.
2. Add more numbers with your own words and movements.
3. Change the words and movements to your own.
4. Have individual students lead the game.

Pizza Man: This call-and-response game provides a low-risk space for students to make mistakes (we don't play with "outs") and an overall space for communal joy. More challenging for the leader to run, but fun to allow students to correct you!

To play:

- Song is as follows:
 - Leader:** Hey bo diddly bop! (hands around mouth to amplify)
 - Group repeats
 - Leader:** I got to get back to my block (with some sort of action)
 - Group repeats
 - Leader:** With a pizza in my hand! (puts hand up with imaginary pizza on it)
 - Group repeats
 - Leader:** I can be a pizza man!

Group repeats

- Leader continues with another thing they can be that rhymes with pizza man. Ideas: Chevy van (with a steering wheel in my hand), Business woman (with a briefcase in my hand), Frying pan (with some bacon in my hand), Magician (emphasis on AN with a wand in my hand), etc.
- Ending of each round includes a list starting with the newest thing first and ending with pizza man. Using the list of examples above, after going through all the round would end with: Magician! (all repeat), Frying Pan! (all repeat), Business woman! (all repeat), Chevy van! (all repeat), Pizza Man! (all repeat)
- When you've added all you can as time allows or all that you can possibly keep track of, the end of the song goes:

Leader: Hey!

Group repeats

Leader: Bo!

Group repeats

Leader: Diddly!

Group repeats

Leader: Bop!

Group repeats

Variations: There are so many possibilities for things that you can have in your hand to be a thing that rhymes with Pizza Man! Open it up to the class for new ideas. Have someone else lead and experience the brain challenge that is leading Pizza Man and keeping track of all the things you can be!

Name and Movement: This game is a big step in scaffolding risk-taking as it is the first time through play that students are asked to use their voices and bodies individually to express themselves in front of a group.

To play:

- Form a circle!
- Leader models saying their name with an accompanying movement.
- Everyone in the circle repeats the name and movement.

- Moving around the circle, the process repeats with each participant saying their name and performing a movement followed by the whole group repeating back what they heard and saw.

Keep in mind:

- “Pass” is always an option for participants; however, if the majority are choosing to pass, it is a sign they are not sufficiently scaffolded to take this particular risk. When students are ready to buy in to this game, it is a wonderful way to provide a stage for students to express themselves and affirm each other’s choices.
- We advise reminding students about “keeping the peace” and using their force fields during this game. They may choose to do the worm, or the splits, or something else physically challenging to accompany their name, and setting the stage before the game to keep everyone physically safe is important.

Variations: Call and response is a great way to get students acclimated to this game, and there are lots of variations that can be added as everyone gets comfortable:

1. Pass the name and movement around the circle like pass the clap.
2. Move beyond their names and have students create any sound with a movement.
3. Pass the sound and movement around the circle mimicking what the person before you did so it ends up being like “telephone” where the sound and movement morph over the course of the game.
4. Provide a topic that informs what a participant chooses to share with sounds/words and movements. Example: Your favorite color could be “Blue!” while making a wave motion with your arm.

Start the Show: This game is another big step in scaffolding risk-taking in self-expression with the payoff of an even bigger affirmation of others’ ideas.

To play:

- Form a circle!
- Start a beat with stomping and clapping. Recommended beat is stomp, clap, stomp stomp clap, with the beat of 1, 2, 3 & 4.
- The song lyrics are:

All: Start the show!

Start, start, the show!

Start the show!

Start start the show!

Leader: Hey (name of person!)

Person called: Hey what?

All but called person: Are you ready?

Person called: For what?

All but called person: To start!

Person called: Start what?

All but called person: Start the show!

Person called: Well...my hands are high (arms in the air) my feet are low (arms point to feet) and this is how I start the show (does any action of their choosing)!

All but called person: Our hands are high (arms in the air) our feet are low (arms point to feet) and this his how we start the show (repeats action done by the called person)!

- Repeat from the top! Leader can stay consistent or switch so that each called person selects the next person.

Keep in mind: Like Name and Movement, a reminder to "keep the peace" and force fields should precede the game for individual safety. Scaffolding this activity can be done as follows:

- Modeling with adult participants in the room.
- Asking the whole group to respond to the person leading.
- Asking smaller groups to respond to the person leading.
- Asking exuberant participants to respond solo.
- Allowing the leader to change hands with the person who has last performed; i.e. Tyler shows us how to start the show, then Tyler asks Charlie to start the show, then Charlie chooses the next person and so on.

Tiny Pickle Charm: A call and response activity for students to affirm themselves and each other. This is a wonderful way to uphold the power of expressing ideas.

To play:

- Form a circle and have students repeat after you: "WE are creative. WE have something to say. WE have something to contribute."
- Have students pair off to connect with a partner and repeat after you: "YOU are creative. YOU have something to say. YOU have something to contribute."
- Have students turn back to the middle of the circle and repeat after you: "I am creative. I have something to say. I have something to contribute."

Harnessing Creativity and Supported Storytelling

- The magic of Whoopensocker is there's always another fun activity coming next! So, if an activity starts feeling stale, move on to the next thing!
- Transitions are tricky. Consider engaging students in pretend as they switch from one activity to the next; for example, have students put on their space suits and turn on their gravity boots so they have to walk slowly from their desks to the circle or vice versa. We also like to fill the entire room with orange jello or become zombies.
- If you have access to flip charts, we recommend using those so you can keep your agreements, brainstorming, group stories, and story prompts in your space.
- Document the names of student authors as much as possible! Begin by recording the names of students when writing a group story. Consider having students sign the agreements as part of agreeing to the agreements.

Individual Writing Time

- During individual writing, remind students that spelling is important, but for Whoopensocker time the most important is to get your ideas on the page, so trust that your teacher is really good at reading all kinds of spelling.
- Support students in expressing themselves in whatever way they would like:
 - Write in whatever language in which you feel most comfortable.
 - Draw a picture or a comic.
 - Ask a teacher to help you get started or scribe for you.

Celebration Through Performance: Creation

Does the idea of a performance make your palms start to sweat? Don't fret! Remember that the goal is to celebrate your learners. You can assess the quality of the performance by **how learners are supported** rather than how professional the performance was. Engagement in performance can look so many different ways!

Here are some tips to help everyone celebrate together:

- Props are fun! But can be distracting. Miming or even having people BE the set or objects can be super fun. Creating props from cardboard or other materials you have on hand can add to the performance-making process and further integrate the arts into your practice.
- Everyone can be every character. This is especially useful when introducing the idea of performing a story written together. What better way to say "yes" to every idea a student has about what character/s they want to be?
- A main character can be played by 2 different actors, switching off in the middle of the show.
- Several students can be one character at the same time (like a dragon could be made up of several students).
- Students can be important sets or props. One of the Whoopensocker staff had a true story that students acted out where they were learning how to ride their bike and fell and their leg went down the sewer, and 100% of the time there was a student so excited to volunteer to be the sewer. In other classrooms, students worked together to be the bike.
- One or more students can be the narrator/s. Reading "Loud and proud" in front of peers is a delightful way to share, and doing so while others are acting is a great leadership experience.
- One person can hold the story for the narrator. If you use a giant post-it to write on, it can be extremely unruly. A designated holder of the paper is an important role.
- Rehearsal is a time for students to practice making choices and then doing the same thing each time. While there is room for improvisation, rehearsal is key to allowing everyone performing to know generally what to expect when they are in front of an audience. If time

allows for at least 2 "run-throughs" of the story performance, that's wonderful.

Celebration Through Performance: Setting the Stage

- To support the transition from rehearsal to performance and to set norms for audience and performers, we like to create "Whoopensocker Theater." This entails picking a space in the classroom that will serve as the stage, and a space that serves as seating (likely on the floor or carpet) for the audience. Consider selecting a different venue to create each time: a fancy theater, a coffee shop, or a park. You can ask students to put on a pretend outfit, collect pretend tickets, take pretend orders, etc.
- Get ready to shine "on stage!" Review what a performer does:
 - Speaks in a loud and proud voice.
 - Practices "Acting" not "Backting" as a reminder to face the audience.
 - Takes a bow!
- Whoop it up in the audience! Having a good audience can make for a great performance! Review what an audience does:
 - "What do you do when something is funny?" Everyone practices laughing.
 - "What do you do when something is surprising?" Everyone practices being surprised.
 - "What do you do when something is sad?" Everyone practices their best sad face and/or crying.
 - "What do you do when you have a question about something on stage? Take it, put it in a jar, and save it for after the performance."
 - "What do you do when you hear 'The End'?" Everyone practices their applause, or snaps if you are at a coffee shop, or silently sign applause for those who may be sensitive to loud sounds.
- Between story performances, ask clarifying questions about the performance that link the lesson with the performance and can serve as evaluation in real time! Questions can be: Who were the characters? What was the setting? What happened? How did the characters feel when that happened? How did you know? What do you want to know more about?

Examples of Student Stories

Group story from video:

Mind Change

By Hildy, Gigi, Christian, Finnegan, Jay, Corbin, Gwendolyn, Giovani, Matthew, and Charlie

Once upon a time at Mama Jolene's Pizza in reverse space, Thoren the Dryad walks in in a dark cloak. Every day, Thoren orders a big mac. Next door in Froyo place, Jeff the Tree, also known as JeffTree, eats froyo with Percy Jackson who is secretly enemies with Thoren. One day Thoren decides not to be evil anymore. But, no one knows that. Because of that Des goes into MJ's, also known as Mama Jolene's, and sees Thoren, gets scared and runs into Froyo and sees Zed, her long lost twin! Because of that Thoren chases them saying, "I'm not evil!" And they all apologized to Thoren and start being nice. Ever since that day they decide to stop competing and being evil and create froyo pizza together. To be continued!

Mr. Mustard Face Paid.

By Juan, Francisco, Josue, Montserrat, Vivian, Lydia, and Diana, Sugar Creek Elementary

Once upon a time, there were 2 hot dogs: Mustard Face and David. They were running un hot dog stand that they owned La Casa Del Hot Dog! Later, a dog named Buga who loved to dance vio el letrero decia "HotDog" y penso, "Omg there might be pretty dogs in there!" Went in and gasped! "Pero que son estos [food] sausages haciendo aqui?! Donde estan los perris bonitos!?" Mustard face y David dijeron, "perros bonitos?! Tu estas robando, nuestros, hot dogs [sausages]?!" Buga says, "no, pero los [could be to eat them OR eat their whole inventory] voy a comer por hacerme esta broma!" Beanface took over La Casa Del Hot Dog and they had to fire them. They were sad. The End.

Untitled (The Knight)

By Westley K., Sugar Creek Elementary

Once upon a time on Marshmallow Island, there was a princess that wanted to be a knight. So she asked the king and he said 'girls can't be knights' and she said "but I want to be a Knight. I don't fit to be a princess or a girl" she said. The king said "all right, but you have to go on the quest." And she failed.

Apple Picking

By Maddie, Goodman Center

Once upon a time Minnie was going for a stroll when she came upon an APPLE tree. She said, "I will go home and get a basket to pick these apples." So Minnie went home and got a basket. She went back to the APPLE tree to pick some apples. When she came to the apple tree it was an ORANGE tree. So she went home to get her orange picking basket. When she got back to the tree it was a PEAR tree. So Minnie went home to get her pear picking basket. On the way she thought, "If this tree keeps changing I should bring all 3 baskets." Then she went home and got all 3 baskets and went to the tree again. When she got to the tree there was a PEAR tree, an APPLE tree, and an ORANGE tree. So she got all 3 baskets and she filled them all up with APPLES, PEARS, and ORANGES. When she got home she made a fruit salad, apple pie, and orange juice. When she was done, she said, "How am I going to eat all this food?" So she called her friends. When Mickey, Donald, Daisy & Goofy got there, she said, "Let's have a party and eat this food!" Goofy drank orange juice, Micky ate fruit salad, and Daisy had apple pie. When they were finished, Minnie's friends thanked her and then they left. Ever since that day Minnie picked APPLES, PEARS, and ORANGES from the tree.