

HRA PORTAL DRAFT SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Title Monologue Rant
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Activity Description: Students create, rehearse and perform a speech about a specific topic that they feel passionate about. Speeches should be 2-3 minutes in length. The speech is performed over video conference or in the case where the internet is unreliable, could be recorded and uploaded for viewing.
Materials Required: Paper and pen(cil), (web) camera, computer
Specific Steps: Students select or are given a topic to rant about. If the teacher chooses to assign topics, they should be vague enough to allow for interpretation, as this project will work best if the students feel a personal connection about the topic. Examples of this vaguery could be: Things that parents do that frustrates you, When am I ever going to use [topic in school], Why don't other kids do [that thing I think is common sense].
Exemplars: Why Tabletop Roleplaying Games Are Important For Kids There is a re-discovery of tabletop roleplaying games happening right now among both young and old. Adults are finding their old dice sets and kids are imagining that they're inventing something new as they try to explain Dungeons and Dragons to their (much wiser) parents. There are many adults, however, who think that games such as these are a waste of time and money. "What's the point of a bunch of fairytale nonsense like that", some might say. "A bunch of kids playing dress up and pretending they're wizards; there's no point, is there?" Worse yet: "Roleplaying games are like video games; it'll just make them violent". I would state in the strongest terms that those people are wrong. These games have been around for a long time and there are a staggering amount of games and genres to suit all tastes. These games are not simply a mindless diversion, however. They are fantastic for developing social skills and creativity in our youth. As far as imagination is concerned, there is something magical about creating a new persona and then exploring the mind and motivations of that persona in a world created only through description and diagrams (and occasionally miniatures). The mind fills the space with its own

interpretation of the constructed world and paints with a palette which is near limitless. The new character can react in countless ways to events as they unfold.

Storytelling is a huge part of this amazing activity. Sometimes created by a facilitator or “Dungeon Master”, sometimes found pre-written in published books, the “DM” tells the story of the adventure, inviting the players to take part in this theatre of the mind. Stories are limited only by the imagination of the participants and the availability of the published resources, which have been steadily printing out new materials since the 70s. So, basically limitless.

Social skills are also a huge part of gaming. Players must find reasons that their characters “choose” to be part of an adventuring party or else, the game can’t go anywhere. Players must learn compromise and group dynamics. They must take turns and listen to each others’ turns, as it will affect the group outcome. They must share resources and solve problems as a group. The list goes on and on. Young people who learn tabletop roleplaying games get a different level of understanding of these real-world skills.

There’s even math! Yes, math! Players are expected to, among other things, keep track of abilities and personal resources. Therefore, there are times when adding and subtracting accurately is vital. Estimating can also be a huge part of this game, as players will have to decide among available abilities how much on average a certain pool of dice will yield as a result. There are dice with varying numbers of sides (commonly up to 20), so the math is hardly simple.

It is my belief that tabletop roleplaying games are very important and can teach a huge number of skills to young people. Those who say that they are frivolous, unimportant, or dangerous have simply not experienced this fantastic passtime for themselves. It makes me really upset when people speak from a place of ignorance. They should learn first hand about a thing before judging it. As to the kids - ask your parents if they ever played Dungeons and Dragons. You might suddenly find yourself holding some well-loved books and a set of mysterious looking dice as a result.

Also, see Rick Mercer’s Rants for some great inspiration:

<https://youtu.be/UqVfbu6cJWo>

<https://youtu.be/KuVgJ-sgBW4>

<https://youtu.be/biC1tcNzkWY>

Adaptations/Extensions: Teachers can guide the subject matter, so as to get products that fit with the subject or mood. For instance, you can limit the topic to something about your specific subject you teach. (Where my mind wanders while I'm trying to do silent reading OR Why the Theory of Gravity is intensely overrated). You can also limit the topic to something light or something serious (Why ketchup does not belong on Kraft Dinner OR How am I supposed to do well in school during Self-Isolation). You can also adapt this so that it must follow the pattern of a story for Creative Writing (This is why my little brother is the most annoying person EVER). This activity can extend into a (respectful) debate where listeners listen to the rant and are then able to ask questions that challenge the premise of the argument. (Best kept for older grades)

Notes: Ensure that the students are ALWAYS aware that respect is paramount! The person presenting must not be interrupted during the speech. This is a student's hard work and must be respected. The student may or may not personally be of the opinion that s/he is presenting, so take great care to challenge only the premise NOT the student.

Outcomes explored: This activity is great for speaking and listening as well as writing outcomes for English. Students are able to take a position and defend it. Good for practising empathy as they can take up a position contrary to what they believe and be ready to argue it. They can exercise their creative story writing skills, even play a character that is not actually themselves. It is even great for healthy living outcomes, as students can use this as a vehicle to get things off their chest that are bothering them. Good for the outcomes of any subject specific rant as it can be used to check for understanding regarding a given topic.