

**Elk Grove Unified School District**  
**Visual and Performing Arts Resources**  
**Theatre**

**Grade 4: Lesson 3**

**Title: Fantastic Animals and Zoo Keepers**

**Standards Addressed**

**Artistic Perception**

*Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre*

- 1.3 Demonstrate how voice (diction, pace, and volume) may be used to explore multiple possibilities for a live reading. *Examples: “I want you to go.” “I want you to go.” or “I want you to go.”*

**Creative Expression**

*Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre*

- 2.1 Demonstrate the emotional traits of a character through gesture and action.

**Aesthetic Valuing**

*Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences*

- 4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics to critique performances as to characterization, diction, pacing, gesture, and movement.

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Floor Plan:** Clear room of desks to allow groups to work standing up.

**Materials Needed:**

- Overhead copy of Fantastic Animal Directions

**Purpose:**

The students will develop skills of improvisation and collaboration by creating and performing an imaginary animal.

**Background:**

This lesson allows the students to practice theatrical skills of collaborating to create a character, as well as pantomime, gesture, movement, and improvisation.

**Key Questions:**

How will the students collaborate to create a group pantomimed animal and zoo keeper?

## Vocabulary:

- \* *Character*—the role played by an actor as he/she assumes another’s identity (physically, mentally, and emotionally).
- \* *Collaboration*—the act of working together in a joint, intellectual effort.
- \* *Improvisation*—the spontaneous use of movement and speech to create a character in a particular situation, usually without a script.
- \* *Performance*—a public, theatrical presentation before an audience.
- \* *Rehearsal*—to practice in preparation for a public performance.
- \* *Vocal quality*—whether the voice is shrill, nasal, raspy, breathy, booming, and so on.

<u>Steps of the Lesson</u>	<u>Thoughts for the Teacher</u>
<b>1 Set up purpose/goals</b> In theatre, what is improvisation and what is collaboration?	<b>How are you making your purpose clear to the students?</b> Through clear, sequenced directions.
<b>2 Engage students</b> The students will become engaged as they observe and then create a fantastic animal.	<b>How can I effectively get the students interested in the content of the lesson?</b> Through drawing students’ past experience of animals, zoos, and classroom visitors.
<b>3 Learning Sequence</b> See actual lesson sequence below.	<b>What are the BIG idea(s) of your presentation? How will students understand/experience the material that you present?</b> In the group activity, the students will have a direct experience in creating a character.
<b>4 Assessment</b> Creating a fantastic animal with a zoo keeper.	<b>How will you allow your students to deepen their understanding of content presented? (Reflect, revise, retell, refine, practice)</b> Students will orate a fantastic zoo animal, and a rubric will be used by peers and teacher to provide response.

## Actual Lesson Sequence

1. Explain that very often a visitor may bring an animal on a TV show or to a school to share with the audience. The class is going to be creating fantastic animals to share with the class.
2. Model: Ask for four students to come to the front of the class. The teacher should then arrange the four students into a fantastic animal and model a zoo keepers visit.
3. Assignment: Put the overhead up and go over the requirements with the class. Allow the students group time to work on this project.
4. Present: The students present each Fantastic Animal to the Class. The class asks questions of the Zoo Keeper and the Animal walks and does two silly tricks.

**Assessment:**

Teacher observation. Peer observation.

**Advanced:** Includes, in a complete and effective manner, all the required elements. Rehearsal is demonstrated in that all members of the group work together smoothly to create movement and sounds of the fantastic animal. The animal has a name and is able to do two silly tricks upon the Zoo Keepers command. The Zoo Keeper is able to answer all questions about where the animal lives, what it eats, etc. The presentation is unique, entertaining, and the fantastic animal is clearly communicated.

**Proficient:** Includes, in a complete and effective manner, most of the required elements. Rehearsal is demonstrated in that all members of the group work together smoothly to create movement and sounds of the fantastic animal, but there may be times when a member of the group appears to not know what to do next. The animal has a name and is able to do two silly tricks upon the Zoo Keepers command. The Zoo Keeper is able to answer most questions about where the animal lives, what it eats, etc. The presentation is entertaining and the fantastic animal is clearly communicated.

**Approaching:** Includes, in a somewhat complete and effective manner, some of the required elements. Inadequate rehearsal is demonstrated in that the group does not work together smoothly to create movement and sounds of the fantastic animal. The animal has a name and is able to do only one silly trick upon the Zoo Keepers command. The Zoo Keeper is not able to answer some questions about where the animal lives, what it eats, etc. The presentation lacks clarity and focus.

**Below:** Includes, in an incomplete manner, few or none of the elements of the fantastic animal assignment. There is little or no evidence of rehearsal. The group cannot create a fantastic animal and the animal cannot do any tricks. The Zoo Keeper is unable to answer basic questions.

**Other Considerations:**

- Classroom desks may need to be cleared out of the way to allow enough floor space for the groups to create fantastic zoo animals.

**Possible Extensions:**

- Have the students do the same assignment dramatizing a real animal they have studied.

**Sources:**

McCaslin, Nellie, Creative Drama in the Classroom, Players Press, Inc., Studio City, CA, 1987. ISBN #0-88734-605-7.



# **Fantastic Animal**

**In groups of four or five, invent a fantastic animal.**

**All but one member of your group must be part of the animal. That one person is the Zoo Keeper.**

**Invent a name for your animal. Where does it live? What does it eat? What does it like to do? What noises does it make? What is the animal's lifestyle? Write these down for the Zoo Keeper.**

**The Zoo Keeper should be able to answer all questions about the animal.**

**Decide who will be what part of the animal. As a group, practice having your animal walk, sit, make noise, etc.**

**Teach your animal two silly animal tricks that it can do on the Zoo Keeper's command.**

**The Zoo Keeper shares a fantastic animal with the class.**