

Elk Grove Unified School District
Visual and Performing Arts Resources
Theatre

Grade 5: Lesson 1

Title: Sense Memory

Standards Addressed

Artistic Perception

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

- 1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre to describe theatrical experiences, such as *sense memory*, *script*, *cue*, *monologue*, *dialogue*, *protagonist*, and *antagonist*.

Creative Expression

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre

- 2.1 Participate in improvisational theatre activities to explore complex ideas and universal themes in literature and life.

Time: 50 minutes

Floor Plan: Classroom with a presentation area.

Materials Needed:

- One blindfold for each pair of students
- A collection of small items, such as:
 - ◊ Grapes
 - ◊ Jelly beans
 - ◊ Plastic bubble wrap
 - ◊ Styrofoam peanuts
 - ◊ Marshmallows
 - ◊ Raisins
 - ◊ Peanuts
- Any other small items

Purpose:

Students will practice using five senses to develop theatre skills.

Background:

If you are a serious actor, designer, or director one of the most important things you can do is learn to be aware of the world around you. To facilitate this, classic theatre games will be used to explore the importance of the five senses to the actor.

Key Questions:

What are the five senses?

How do students use observation skills to develop sense memory?

Vocabulary:

- * *Gesture*—an expressive movement of the body limbs.
- * *Monologue*—a long speech by a single character.
- * *Pantomime*—acting without words through facial expressions, gesture, and movement.
- * *Sense memory*—memories of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures. In acting it is used to help define and inform a character in a certain situation.

<u>Steps of the Lesson</u>	<u>Thoughts for the Teacher</u>
1 Set up purpose/goals What is the importance of the five senses in theatre skills?	How are you making your purpose clear to the students? Through the use of modeling and direct instruction.
2 Engage students The students immediately become engaged as the lesson begins.	How can I effectively get the students interested in the content of the lesson? Through the use of hands-on activities.
3 Learning Sequence See actual learning sequence below.	What are the BIG idea(s) of your presentation? How will students understand/experience the material that you present? The use of sense memory is a basic theatre skill.
4 Assessment Embedded in the lesson.	How will you allow your students to deepen their understanding of content presented? (Reflect, revise, retell, refine, practice) Students will recall the five senses and apply sensory information to inform movement as an actor.

Actual Lesson Sequence

1. Remembering Your Senses. Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair a blindfold and direct one partner to be blindfolded. When this is done, give the remaining partner one sample of half of your small items. Ask the sighted student to place a grape in his/her partner's hand. Ask the student holding the grape to smell it and feel the shape and texture. Explain that the object is edible. Encourage the students to take bites, listening to sounds they make as they do. Repeat with jelly beans. Place bubble wrap in each student's hand. Explain that the item is inedible. Invite the student to examine the shape, texture, and smell of the item. Repeat with the Styrofoam peanuts. Ask partners to trade positions and repeat the exercise with different items. At the conclusion of the session, discuss with the students which item had the most effect on their imagination and why?
2. Listening. *Sit comfortably in a chair. Close your eyes. Listen to everything for 1-2 minutes. What sounds did you hear? How many sounds could you identify? How many of those would you have normally noticed? Why?*

3. **Imagining Sensations.** *When you become more aware of the sensations around you, the next step is to learn to use your imagination to reproduce those sensations. Remember one of the items you held earlier today. Imagine picking it up, holding it, using it, tasting it. Does it have a size, shape, weight?*
4. Ask the students to imagine they are holding a cup or glass. Have them hold it on the desk in front of them. Now ask them to raise it and take a drink as if they are drinking water, cola, hot coffee, lukewarm coffee, grapefruit juice, cough syrup, milk, buttermilk. Have the students stand or sit at their desks to do this. Remind the students to show what each liquid is through physical actions and reactions.
5. **Space Walk:** Ask the students to walk around the room in a random pattern without talking. *Say, it is a lovely day. You feel the sun on your back. It is getting hot. Show me how hot it is. It is really hot. You take out a water bottle and get a drink. You keep walking. You notice a cloud overhead. Pretty soon the sky is really cloudy. Then you feel a drop of rain on your head. It is nice. Rain on a warm summer day. Then there are more drops and more drops. There is more and more rain. You are dripping wet. You want to get home. It is getting cold. You are freezing. Ice is forming on the ground. It is slippery. Finally you make it home. Take out your key and let yourself into the house. Put wood in the fireplace and build a fire. Now relax and get warm. Give yourselves a hand, great job.*

Assessment:

Teacher observation.

Advanced: Student volunteers, makes good eye contact, and makes creative use of movement. The student actor clearly communicates the use of sense memory. All the actor's actions and reactions demonstrate skillful use of sense memory.

Proficient: Student is ready to go when called on, makes adequate eye contact and makes good use of movement. The student actor adequately communicates the use of sense memory. Most of the actor's actions and reactions demonstrate skillful use of sense memory.

Approaching: Student needs encouragement of looks unwilling when called on, avoids eye contact, and makes little use of movement. The student actor is not successfully using sense memory to communicate with the audience. Few or none of the actor's actions and reactions demonstrate use of sense memory.

Other Considerations:

- Part of these lessons will be difficult for blind or deaf students. You may want to substitute other theatre games for activities that use only one sense.
- Use scraps of fabric for blindfolds.

Possible Extensions:

- Other ideas for space walks include: walking through tall grass, sticker weeks, jelly, water, peanut butter, mud, gravel, spaghetti in tomato sauces, feathers, a thick carpet, a floor covered with broken glass. Feel the difference between each item. Ask yourself, "How does each change effect the way you walk?"
- Have the students write about senses used at a sporting event, wedding, birthday party, or at any important event in their lives. Turn this writing into an original narrative or monologue.

- Team Competition: Sample list is from *Theatre Arts 1*. Divide the class in half. This is a charades-type game. Side-coach the students that they are to remain inside the object. Each object becomes more difficult.

Team A

in a row boat
in a play pen
in a shower
in an automobile
in a jail cell
in a store window
in a barber shop
in a space capsule
in a wind tunnel
in a bee hive
in a shoe
in a television set
in a soup bowl
in a fluorescent tube

Team B

in a church
in a restaurant
in a straight jacket
in a swimming pool
in an operating room
in a classroom
in an art gallery
in a hot air balloon
in a Broadway chorus line
in a maze
in a trash can
in a fish bowl
inside a grandfather's clock
in a tube of toothpaste

Sources:

Engelsman, Alan, Theatre Arts 1, St. Louis, Missouri, Alpen and Jeffries Publishers, 1983. ISBN #10879692-03-1.

Grote, David, Theatre Preparation and Performance, Glenview, Illinois, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1992. ISBN #0-673-27190-0.

Spolin, Viola, Theatre Games for the Classroom—A Teacher's Handbook, Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1986. ISBN #0-8101-4004-7.