

Drama - Grade 7 & 8

Learning Goal:

We are learning to use the elements of drama to create, analyse and explore a variety of drama pieces from different contexts.

Elements of Drama for Grade 7 & 8

dramatic works. In an educational setting, a variety of drama works that are experienced, created, and viewed by students (e.g., plays, improvised drama, short scenes, tableaux, shared drama experiences, reader's theatre scripts).

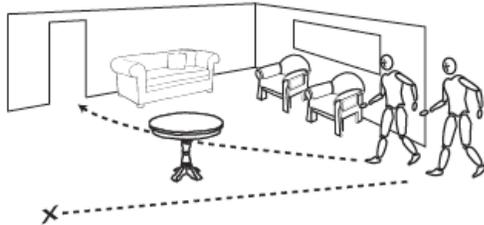
elements of drama. Fundamental components of drama, including the following:

- *character/role.* An actor's portrayal of a character in a drama, developed with attention to background, motivation, speech, and physical traits.
- *focus or emphasis.* The theme, character, problem, event, moment in time, or centre of visual interest (e.g., in a tableau or staging) that gives purpose or impetus to a drama.
- *place and time.* The setting, time period (e.g., past, present, future), duration (e.g., one day), and chronology of the action of a story or drama.
- *relationship(s).* The connection(s) between people, events, or circumstances.
- *tension.* A heightened mental or emotional state resulting from uncertainty about how the conflict or problem in a drama will be resolved.

Role/Character (Grade 7)

- Motivations of historical and fictional characters
- Various facets of multidimensional characters
- Revealing character through the use of props and movement/blocking
- Maintaining commitment to role *prop.* A portable object used in a drama to support the action or to give authenticity to the setting.

blocking. A technique used in the staging of a theatrical production to prescribe the positions and patterns of movement of actors on the stage.



Role/Character (Grade 8)

- Analysing the background, motivation, speech and actions of characters to build roles
- Using voice, stance, gesture and facial expression to portray character

voice. The distinctive style of expression of a character, an author, or an individual work conveyed through such things as the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, and imagery, as well as rhythm and pace of speech and tone of voice.

gesture. A movement of the body or limbs used to express or emphasize a thought, emotion, or idea.



Relationship (Grade 7)

- Developing and analysing multidimensional relationships in the drama

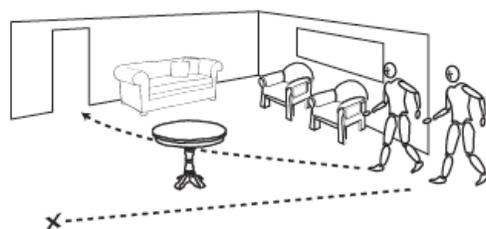
Relationship (Grade 8)

- Analysing relationships to develop the interplay between characters

Time and Place (Grade 7)

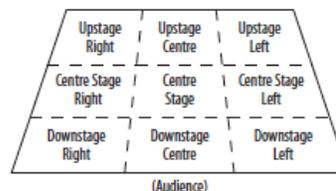
- Improvising with/adapting available materials to establish setting
- Using blocking and stage areas in planning and performance

blocking. A technique used in the staging of a theatrical production to prescribe the positions and patterns of movement of actors on the stage.



stage areas. Nine identified sections of the stage, used to help clarify the positions and movements of the actors in stage directions and during rehearsals and performances. The divisions are shown in the diagram below:

improvisation. An unscripted, unrehearsed drama spontaneously created by a student in response to a prompt or an artefact. *See also* prepared improvisation.



prepared improvisation. Improvised enactments of key moments that are central to a drama. Like tableau work – and unlike ordinary improvisations – prepared improvisations require planning and collaboration. Advance preparation includes identifying a suitably significant moment and giving thought to the type of dialogue that would be appropriate in the scene. Limiting the scene to two minutes helps students restrict their scenes to what is essential.

creating an environment. The use of available materials and furniture to represent the setting for a drama (e.g., a courtroom, a bedroom). Sometimes a visual arts extension may be introduced to build belief in the drama (e.g., sheets of fabric painted to look like the walls of a cave).

Time and Place (Grade 8)

- Using props, costumes and furniture to establish setting
- Modifying production elements to suit different audiences

prop. A portable object used in a drama to support the action or to give authenticity to the setting.

creating an environment. The use of available materials and furniture to represent the setting for a drama (e.g., a courtroom, a bedroom). Sometimes a visual arts extension may be introduced to build belief in the drama (e.g., sheets of fabric painted to look like the walls of a cave).

audience. (1) In a formal or traditional play, the audience is typically seated in front of or around the action of the play. (2) In a shared drama experience or role play in the classroom, the students typically are both actors and spectators in the experience. At times, the students are all in role together; at other times, some are out of role viewing a group presentation as audience members. They may also be audience members viewing a scene or presentation while they are in role (e.g., in role as the king's assistant, viewing a presentation by local villagers).

Tension (Grade 7)

- Using sound, lighting, technology and stage effects to heighten tension
- Using foreshadowing to create suspense

atmosphere. The mood established for a drama, or for a scene within a drama. Music, lighting, sets, and costumes may all be used to help create a particular mood or atmosphere.

technology. In drama, machinery, including electrical or digital equipment, that is used to help implement or enhance a drama production (e.g., lighting equipment, sound equipment, recording equipment, projector).

soundscapes/sound collage. A combination of sounds used to create an atmosphere or to enhance important moments of a scene. Students work as a group to agree on and produce the desired sound effects, using voice and/or instruments. This strategy requires careful listening as well as group cooperation and sensitivity.

Tension (Grade 8)

- Using various stage effects to produce specific audience reactions

juxtaposition. The contrast of strikingly different elements to create interest and tension (e.g., differences between characters, settings, moods, the use of space, or the pace of scenes).

Focus and Emphasis (Grade 7)

- Using a range of devices and effects to highlight specific aspects of the performance for the audience

Focus and Emphasis (Grade 8)

- Using a wide range of devices to highlight the central theme for the audience
- Making deliberate artistic choices to sharpen focus

meaning. (1) The intended message expressed by an actor or by a drama work. (2) A viewer or listener's understanding of the message of a drama work.

Drama Vocabulary

Conventions

conventions of drama. Practices and forms of representation that are widely accepted for use in drama instruction as ways to help students explore meaning and deepen understanding. Hot seating, voices in the head, and freeze-frame images are a few examples, among many.

dramatic play. Imaginative, pretend play, largely self-directed, that is typical of primary students. The children assume roles, often dressing up and using everyday or found objects to represent objects in their pretend play (e.g., a ruler may represent a magic wand; a structure built of blocks may represent a fort). Students use dramatic play to enact familiar stories, role play real-life scenarios, and create and live through imagined stories and scenarios.

a day in the life. A convention in which students explore the experience of a person by working backwards from a significant moment or turning point in a character's life to build the story that accounts for the event. Students work in groups, using tableau, improvisation, and/or role play to depict key moments that may have occurred in the last twenty-four hours of the character's life. The scenes are then run in chronological sequence to depict the events leading up to the dramatically significant moment.

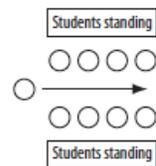
caption making. A convention in which students work in groups to devise slogans, titles, newspaper headlines, or chapter headings that convey in words the intended message of tableaux or pictures. The captions may be shared orally by the groups, read out by a narrator, or written on placards to be read by the class.

chorus. A convention in which individuals or groups provide spoken explanation or commentary on the main action of a drama.

narration. A convention in which a speaker describes the action that is occurring in a drama.

collective conscience. A convention in which students act together in a group to give the main character advice.

corridor of voices. A convention used to explore the inner life of a character in drama. The character moves along the “corridor” between two lines of students who voice feelings, thoughts, or moral concerns the character might be likely to have. The convention can also be used to explore the thoughts of a character who is facing a difficult task or decision. In this case, the voices would give advice and warnings. See also voices in the head.



docudrama. A fictionalized drama based on real events and people.

drama anthology. A drama based on a collection of related sources about a particular theme, issue, or person. Both fiction and non-fiction sources may be used (e.g., diary entries, songs, poems, speeches, images, headlines).

farce. A comic drama that uses ridiculously improbable situations and horseplay, rather than wit, to create humour.

flashback and *flash forward.* Conventions used to provide different perspectives on the action in a drama by showing events from an earlier or later time. A *flashback* might be used to explain the causes of an action in the present, a *flash forward* to show an action in the light of its imagined or actual outcome.

guided imagery. A convention used to help a group visualize the setting for a drama. The teacher or a student uses descriptive language to create a word picture of the physical setting and/or historical context in which the action takes place.

forum theatre. A convention in which students collaboratively explore options or possible outcomes in order to shape a dramatic scene. A dramatic situation is improvised by a small group while the rest of the class observes. All students participate in creating the scene – through discussion, by stopping the scene to make suggestions, or by taking over a role. The objective is to create an authentic scene that fits the dramatic context and is satisfying to the whole group.

freeze-frame image. A convention in which students pose to make an image or tableau that communicates an idea or a theme or that depicts a moment in time. Also called a group sculpture or tableau. *See* tableau.

tableau. A group of silent, motionless figures used to represent a scene, theme, or abstract idea (e.g., peace, joy), or an important moment in a narrative. Tableaux may be presented as stand-alone images to communicate one specific message or may be used to achieve particular effects in a longer drama work. Important features of a tableau include character, space, gesture, facial expressions, and levels.

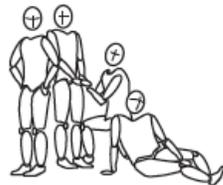
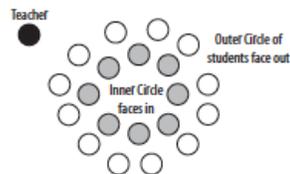


tableau cross-over. A convention in which groups of students form tableaux, after which each student exchanges his or her original tableau position for the position of a partner in the other group's tableau. The convention is used to help students contrast two different but important moments or ideas in a drama (e.g., the effects of a sandstorm on a village years ago before there were trees versus the effects of a sandstorm on the village today). Each tableau should depict a powerful image (e.g., the worst moment during or after the storm).

hot seating. A convention in which students allow themselves to be questioned by the rest of the group. The questioners may speak as themselves or in role (e.g., as reporters).

inner and outer circle. A convention used for ensemble sharing of contrasting perspectives related to a drama. Students gather in two circles: an inner circle representing one character in the drama and an outer circle representing a second character. (1) *In role:* Students as characters describe their reactions and state of mind at a particular point in the drama. (2) *Out of role:* Students share personal reflections with one another as they are given prompts. Students may speak spontaneously or read from a short passage. Typically, the teacher orchestrates the sharing (e.g., by tapping a student on the shoulder when it is that student's turn to speak), so that the contrasting points of view are highlighted for dramatic effect.



interviewing. A convention in which a person or group in the role of "interviewer" asks questions of a student in the role of "expert" to gain information about a particular dramatic situation.

mantle of the expert. A convention in which students act in role as "experts" to resolve a problem or challenge. The teacher may also participate, in the role of facilitator.

mapping. A convention in which students make maps or diagrams in order to establish the context, build belief in the fictional setting, or reflect on the drama.

meetings. A convention in which students and teacher come together in role to hear new information, make decisions, and plan actions or strategies to resolve problems that have emerged in a drama.

overheard conversations. A convention in which the students, role playing in small groups, “listen in” on what is being said by different characters in the drama. A signal is given to freeze all the groups. Then each group in turn is “brought to life” to continue its improvisation while the other groups watch and listen.

role on the wall. A convention in which students represent an important role in picture form “on the wall” (usually on a large sheet of paper) so that information about the role can be collectively referred to or added as the drama progresses. Information may include: the character’s inner qualities and external appearance; the community’s and/or the family’s opinions about the character; the character’s view of him or herself; the external and internal forces working for and against the character; known and possible hidden influences on the action or character.

storytelling. A convention in which storytelling is applied in a drama context. An account of imagined or real people and events is presented through action, dialogue, and/or narration by a teacher or student narrator or by characters within the drama. Storytelling may be done in small groups, large groups, or with the whole class.

stranger in role. A convention in which a stranger is introduced into the drama at key moments to refocus the action and/or give it a new direction.

voices in the head. A convention used to deepen students’ understanding of a conflict or a difficult choice facing a character in the drama. The student representing the character remains silent while others standing behind speak out to express the thoughts and feelings the character might be experiencing at this point. *See also* corridor of voices.

wave. An improvisational convention in which students stand in a circle or walk in a line, shoulder to shoulder, following a leader, and spontaneously or sequentially drop out of the line to create poses to mirror and then modify an aspect of the shape and/or movement. The shapes can reflect the themes, issues, ideas, or characters being explored.

Planning

artefacts. Props, posters, maps, letters, or media materials that can be used to establish a character, enhance a setting, and/or advance a story.

collective creation. A widely used genre in which students collaborate in a group to agree on a shared vision that represents a place or person in a drama. The idea can then be used as a reference for discussing ideas about the place or person. *See also* collective understanding.

collective understanding. An interpretation of a character and what he or she is experiencing that is agreed on by all members of a group. *See also* collective creation.

collective drawing. A convention that focuses on building a context. An image is created by the class or small groups to represent a place or people in the drama. The image can then be used as a reference for discussing ideas about the place or person.

dramatic exploration. The spontaneous, imaginative use by students of materials and equipment available in the classroom to create drama. The teacher observes and listens while children are exploring, and provides guidance as needed. For example, the teacher may pose a question to prompt deeper thinking, or may introduce new vocabulary.

furthering the action. A group activity in which students build on one another's ideas about how to move the action of the drama forward.

genres. The categories into which dramas and other literary works can be grouped. Examples include: thriller, comedy, action, horror, docudrama, melodrama.

interpretation. (1) The process of making meaning from stories, images, and poetry and the use of drama conventions to represent or communicate that meaning to others. Students can also interpret drama works that they view at the theatre and on television.

invented notation. A form of “picture writing” that students can use in a drama context to explore movement and ideas for drama (e.g., diagrams of blocking to plan movement; symbols to represent aspects of a myth, story, poem, or natural occurrence).



out of role. Not acting a part. The term may be used to refer to discussions that take place out of character to further the drama or to plan or discuss artistic choices.

in role. Acting a part.

picture making. An activity in which students respond to the drama experience by creating pictures about it, either independently or in groups. The pictures could represent something needed for the drama (e.g., the bridge that connects the two communities on either side of the river).

place mat. An activity used to generate ideas. Students record ideas on a piece of paper divided into sections, with a square or circle at the centre representing “common ground”. The students generate ideas individually and group ideas they agree on in the “common ground” at the centre.

plot. The sequence of events in a narrative or drama. The sequence can be chronological or presented in a series of flashbacks, flash forwards, and vignettes.

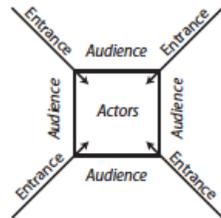
reader’s theatre. A theatre genre in which students: (a) adopt the roles of different characters and of a narrator to read a text; or (b) develop scripts based on familiar texts, practise their parts, and present their rehearsed reading to others. Reader’s theatre does not involve costumes, sets, props, or movement. The readers generally stand while reading, using their voices to bring the action of the scene to life.

scene. A unit of a play in which the setting is fixed and the time is continuous.

simulation. A re-creation of a series of events from real life. Students are assigned roles and provided with background information to help them re-enact the real-life situation. Students work in role in groups to plan their contribution, then negotiate as a class to create a joint product.

source. A text, idea, or event that provides the basis for a drama.

theatre in the round/arena stage. A type of stage situated in the centre of the space, with the audience facing it from all sides. The placement of the audience quite close to the action creates a feeling of intimacy and involvement.



Characters

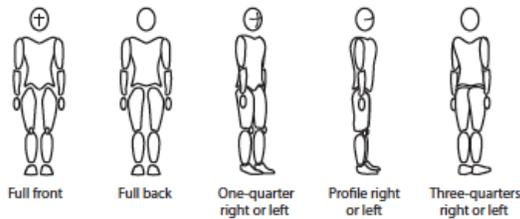
antagonist. The character who is the principal opponent of the main character in a play.

protagonist. The main character in a play.

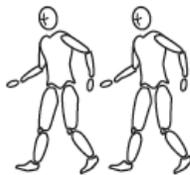
body position. A general term used to refer to an actor's position in relation to the audience.

The range of positions includes:

- *full front* (i.e., the actor faces the audience directly)
- *profile right or left* (i.e., the actor's right or left side is facing the audience)
- *one-quarter right or left* (i.e., the actor faces about halfway between full front and profile)
- *full back* (i.e., the actor's back is to the audience)
- *three-quarters right or left* (i.e., the actor faces about halfway between full back and profile)



crossing-stage procedure. Customary practice when two or more actors cross the stage. The actor closest to the audience (the downstage actor) slightly trails the other actor, so as not to block that actor, as shown below.



empathy/empathize. The capacity to “step into the shoes” of another and to understand and appreciate that person's experiences and circumstances. Empathy is developed through role play, reflection, writing in role, and viewing and discussing plays, stories, and films. The ability to empathize with characters in drama is a fundamental aspect of building role/character and is essential to skill development.

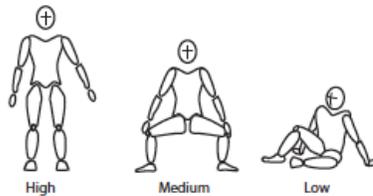
group role play. Role playing in which the whole group, including the teacher, acts in role in an imagined context. *See also* role playing.

role playing/role play. An instructional technique in which a student and/or the teacher acts the part of a character in an imagined situation, usually in order to explore the character's thoughts, feelings, and values. *See also* group role play; writing in role.

writing in role. Writing done from the point of view of a character in a drama in order to deepen the writer's understanding of the character and create or develop scenes that reflect this understanding. Some examples of forms that may be used include diaries, letters, and reports on specific events that indicate the character's responses to those events.

monologue. A long speech by one character in a drama, intended to provide insight into the character.

level. A term used to refer to the position of an actor's body in relation to the vertical. Standing represents a high level, sitting or bending over a medium level, and lying down or crawling a low level.



Actions

ceremony/ritual. A set of actions prescribed by the beliefs or traditions of a community or culture and thought to have symbolic value.

choral speaking, chanting. The reading or reciting of a text by a group. Preparation for a performance may involve interpretation of the text; experimentation with language, rhythm, volume, pace, and different numbers of voices; and rehearsal.

flocking. A type of improvisation in which students move in groups, with no set pattern or in a diamond formation, following a leader and all doing the same movements simultaneously. This is an extended version of mirroring for three or more people. Participants do not necessarily need to be able to watch each other, as long as they can see the leader.

mime. The use of gesture, movement, and facial expression without words or sounds to communicate actions, character, relationships, or emotion.

mirroring. A spontaneous improvisational drama structure used to help students explore characters, themes, issues, or ideas through movement. Students stand face to face and move their bodies to follow their partner's movements. Variations include a group following a leader's body and/or hand movements.



turning-on-stage procedure. A customary practice that calls for an actor to face the audience when turning on stage.

Grade 7 Drama Activities

B1. Creating and Presenting

Expectation	Prompt
Engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives related to current issues, themes and relationships from a wide variety of sources.	What drama conventions could be used to inform the audience about the events leading up to the issue? What roles should be adopted to represent the range of perspectives?

Expectation	Prompt
Demonstrate and understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and combining several elements to create dramatic effects.	Which convention will you use to begin/end the piece? What roles could be introduced to explore the relationships in more detail?

Expectation	Prompt
Plan and shape the direction of the drama by working with others, both in and out of role, to generate ideas and explore multiple perspectives.	How could you use the conventions of flashback and flash forward to examine turning points and major decisions in the drama piece? How might you physically represent the different emotions experienced by the characters in the drama?

Expectation	Prompt
Communicate feelings, thoughts and abstract ideas through drama, using audio visual and/or technological aids to heighten the dramatic experience.	How could you use sound to help listeners visualize the action of a radio drama? How could you use lighting and projection to enhance the setting. What images could you project?

Grade 8 Drama Activities

B1. Creating and Presenting

Expectation	Prompt
Engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives and possible outcomes related to complex issues, themes and relationships from a wide variety of sources.	How could you use drama conventions such as conversations, mapping, or role on the wall to dramatize two opposing views on a community issue?

Expectation	Prompt
Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and manipulating multiple elements and conventions to create and enhance a variety of drama works.	How can corridor of voices help you to understand your role more deeply and also to experience other perspectives on what the character might think/feel? In your prepared improvisation, how can your physical movements in relation to one another be used to highlight the nature of your emotional relationship?

Expectation	Prompt
Plan and shape the direction of the drama by negotiating ideas and perspectives with others, both in and out of role.	Discuss one aspect of the presentation that communicates the meaning clearly. Identify one thing that could be changed to strengthen the presentation.

Expectation	Prompt
Communicate feelings, thoughts and abstract ideas through drama, using technological aids for specific purposes and audiences.	What are some ways you can use objects or technology to represent the moods of the different characters? How could you use technology to signal to the audience when an actor's speech represents the characters private, inner thoughts?

Grade 7 Drama Activities

B2. Reflecting, Responding & Analysing

Expectation	Prompt
Construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to their own ideas, feelings and experiences.	This drama presented one side of an environmental issue. Whose perspective is missing? Why do you think it has been left out? How do you feel about that? What words might you give to this voice?

Expectation	Prompt
Analyse and describe, using drama terminology, how drama elements are used to communicate meaning in a variety of drama works.	How do the elements work together to convey a message? Do you think the central character's intentions are clearly communicated? What evidence can you give to support your point of view?

Expectation	Prompt
Identify and give examples of strengths, interests and areas of improvement as drama creators, performers and audience members.	What aspects of drama do you enjoy most? What skills are you most proud of? Can you identify one skill that you feel you need to practice? In what ways did you contribute to the group?

Grade 7 Drama Activities

B2. Reflecting, Responding & Analysing

Expectation	Prompt
Construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to social concerns at both the local and global level.	What are the key messages of this drama? How does its message relate to your own life experiences and opinions? Can you sum up what this play was about in a paragraph? Is this an important play for others to see? Why?

Expectation	Prompt
Evaluate, using drama terminology, how effectively drama works use the elements of drama to engage the audience and communicate a theme or message.	Imagine you are a theatre critic. How many stars does this drama deserve? What key elements were used in the drama? How successful were the actors in using movement, voice and gesture to create interest?

Expectation	Prompt
Identify and give examples of strengths, interests and areas of improvement as drama creators, performers and audience members.	About what area of drama do you feel most confident? What areas do you want to pursue in the future? What drama conventions did you use most successfully to express your thoughts, feelings and ideas?

Grade 7 Drama Activities

B3. Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

Expectation	Prompt
Compare and contrast how social values are communicated in several different drama forms and/or styles of live theatre from different times and places.	How did the dances of the Acadians evolve when they were forced to immigrate to Louisiana? What factors influenced this evolution?

Expectation	Prompt
Identify and describe several ways in which drama and theatre contribute to contemporary social, economic and cultural life.	Why is it beneficial to have local theatre groups in our community? What theatre jobs require performance skills? If you interviewed people involved in drama/theatre, what could you ask them about the value they place on theatre as part of their own lives and the life of the community?

Grade 8 Drama Activities

B3. Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

Expectation	Prompt
Analyse the influence of the media on a wide variety of drama forms and/or styles of live theatre.	What are some similarities and differences in how drama expresses ideas and emotions compared to other art forms. In what ways can technology enhance or detract from the message or meaning in the drama?

Expectation	Prompt
Identify and describe a wide variety of ways in which drama and theatre make or have made contributions to social, cultural and economic life in a variety of times and places.	Why do we provide opportunities to participate in drama in school and in the community? Why might theatrical performances have been important in times when very few people could read and write? How do theatre performances help the economy?