

NSS Language Arts Electives

Learning English through Drama

Level: S4

Objectives:

1. To understand the important elements of drama
2. To appreciate and evaluate a drama performance

Mastering the Basics

Activity One

Warm up: Matching

Dramas, like other types of literature, can be analyzed through using the question words.

What ??	The Plot or the Story What happens in the story, with a beginning, a middle part and the end.
Who ??	Characters or the people in a drama Male lead / female lead / supporting character/ protagonist/ antagonist / actor / actress
Where ??	Setting on a stage/ background scenery/ props/ set decoration The physical setting is not real and it is merely represented on stage. The audience need imagination to make the setting “real”.
When ??	Time
What ??	Conflict/ problem/ tension/ underlying (hidden) theme Help the forward movement for the drama
Why ??	The writer or the author wants to employ some devices to explain the thoughts, feelings and actions of the characters
How ??	Acts or scenes An Act is like a major part of the drama. The action is all related to a specific part of the plot. A Scene is like a chapter in a book and it has its own beginning, middle and end.

Activity Two

In groups of four, study the following dialogue and discuss about the following dramatic situation.

A: A loaf of bread, please.
B: Is this one okay for you?
A: Something smaller?
B: What about this one?
A: Fine, how much?

1. Who are involved in the scene?
2. Where does the event happen?
3. When does the event happen?
4. What has happened?
5. Why does it happen?

Activity Three

Reading in context

A is a young girl, and has run away from home. She is scared of being caught, but she is really hungry. She goes into a bakery to buy some bread. There, she sees two police officers standing by the lamppost. She is nervous.
B is the owner of the bakery, a kind and old woman.

Now read the dialogue again. Do you get a different experience from the dialogue? Is it more interesting?

Do the additional information/ background information help you to understand the scene more?

- Dramatic tension
- The plot
- The feeling of the young girl

Subtext is the unspoken real thoughts and feelings of the characters.

Prologue occurs at the beginning of a play.

Epilogue occurs at the end of a play.

Stage directions, which often encased in brackets, guide the actors on how to move or feel or act, and guide the readers in understanding the written text of a play.

A: (rush in the bakery, hurriedly)

A loaf of bread, please.

God, I am so hungry. I hope that those cops don't see me. I know they surely will catch me if they see me...

B: (helpful)

Is this one okay for you?

My goodness...she is so young to be out so late at night. Why does she look so scared? She keeps looking at those cops. Why? The poor dear looks hungry....

A: (Something smaller?)

That loaf looks really good! But I don't have enough money. God! I am so cold and hungry.....my whole body is shaking...

*B: (Smile and
What about this one?
()*

A: Fine, how much?

This lady is really nice. I think it is okay now? Or she is going to turn me in to the cops....

Part 1: Mastering the Basics

Drama vocabulary

Actor/actress	Narrator
Act/to act	Part(s)
Audience	Perform (to perform a play)
Cast (to cast a part)	Performance
Character	Play
Costumes	Project (to project your voice)
Deliver (to deliver lines)	Props
Dialogue	Rehearse (to rehearse your lines; to rehearse a play)
Director	Rehearsal
Direct (to direct a play)	Role
Drama	Scenes
Emotion	Script
Express(to express emotion)	Set (to set the scene)
Lead actor/actress	Sound effects
Lighting	Stage
Lines	Stage directions
Make up (to do make up)	Supporting actor/actress
Monologue	Theatre
Motivation	

Practising how to use stress and intonation to convey meaning

A. Placing stress

Placing stress on different content words changes the meaning of a sentence.

Example

Ms. Smith teaches Geography. (The meaning here is that Ms. Smith, not someone else, teaches Geography.)

Ms. Smith teaches Geography. (The meaning here is that Ms. Smith teaches, not studies, Geography.)

Ms. Smith teaches Geography. (The meaning here is that Ms. Smith teaches Geography, not another subject.)

Activity

With a partner, practise altering the meaning of each of the following sentences by placing stress on different content words. Listen carefully when your partner places stress on different content words and identify where the stress has been placed to express different meanings.

I never saw him do that.
She told me not to talk to strangers.
Do you want to go home?
Paul wants to marry Diana.
Smoking is a dangerous habit.
Are they married?
Who said you could go there?
I never said that.
You need to listen carefully.
You shouldn't say that.

B. Using intonation to convey meaning

A statement of fact usually ends with falling intonation. Rising intonation can be used to change a statement into a question, or to express doubt.

Examples:

falling intonation - *Mr. Howard is married.*

rising intonation - *Mr. Howard is married?* (With rising intonation, the statement becomes a question.)

Activity

1. With a partner, practise using falling and rising intonation to express the sentences as statements of fact or as statements that indicate doubt.

- Jamie's a girl.
- He won the race.
- She's a vegetarian.
- He resigned his position.
- Paul received an A.

2. With your partner, quiz each other on whether you can hear the sentence as a statement of fact or a statement that indicates doubt. Put a tick in the correct column.

Sentence	Expresses a fact	Expresses doubt
She's British.		
He goes to church every Sunday.		
The test has been arranged for Monday.		
They've been dating for a month.		
He was fired.		

Identifying and expressing different emotions, feelings and motivations

In small groups, discuss how the emotions, feelings or motivations in Column II in the table below might be conveyed or expressed. Match them with possible verbal cues (words, sounds, and voice changes) in Column I and non-verbal cues (facial and body movements) in Column III accordingly.

I. Verbal cues		II. Emotions, Feelings and Motivations		III. Non-verbal cues
a. "ouch", grunting	k	<i>Dislike</i>	15	1. clenched teeth
b. "are you sure?", "really?", questioning		<i>Boredom</i>		2. sniffing, trembling, heavy breathing, lowering eyes
c. imperatives that are demanding – "get me that", dominating the conversation		<i>Happiness</i>		3. touching hair, brushing up next to the person, embracing
d. "yuk", "that's gross"		<i>Excitement</i>		4. open mouth, opening hands/arms in a questioning manner
e. "honey", "sweetheart", flirting		<i>Sadness</i>		5. holding hands, hugging, leaning towards the other person
f. asking questions, "oh, my God!"		<i>Confidence</i>		6. hands covering face, quietness, walking away
g. "my dear", agreeing, using the person's name you are addressing		<i>Nervousness</i>		7. finger wagging, ignoring or not acknowledging the other person
h. "wow"		<i>Bewilderment</i>		8. wincing, holding the part of the body that hurts
i. "thank you", "please", "would you mind..."		<i>Pain</i>		9. biting lip, avoiding eye contact, breathing unevenly
j. stuttering, false starts		<i>Anger and annoyance</i>		10. smiling, eyes open wide
k. curt replies		<i>Superiority</i>		11. giving way to others, opening doors/pulling out chairs for others
l. low and weak voice, screaming		<i>Love (care and kindness)</i>		12. rolling eyes, shrugging, looking away
m. loud voice, imperatives, swearing		<i>Love (attraction)</i>		13. good posture, good eye contact, open chest
n. "we're sorry", "it hurts", crying		<i>Fear</i>		14. scrunching eye brows
o. uninterested voice		<i>Disgust</i>		15. pouting mouth, wrinkling nose
p. "certainly", "of course"		<i>Politeness</i>		16. raised eyebrows, sneering, raised chin
q. "that's great", "whoa", light laughing		<i>Doubt</i>		17. jumping up and down, arm waving