

MAKING THE MOST OF FREEZE-FRAMES, THOUGHT BUBBLES AND FEELINGS HEARTS

WHAT IS A FREEZE-FRAME?

A freeze-frame is a drama strategy often used to slow down the action, in order to help pupils consider a significant moment of human experience in more depth.

In the context of a lesson, a freeze-frame is a frozen depiction of a significant moment from a text/ historical event/ photograph or piece of art work. It is sometimes referred to as a still image and is comparable to the freeze-frame effect created by pressing the pause button on a moving image.

HOW CAN FREEZE-FRAMES HELP PUPILS LEARN?

- 1) **Reading:** In order to make decisions about where the characters in the freeze-frame are looking, and what they are thinking and feeling, pupils have to read the text for meaning, including reading with inference and deduction
- 2) **Speaking and listening:** Engaging in the analysis of the text to produce the freeze-frame provides pupils with an opportunity to express opinions and engage in discussion. The strategy also enables pupils to take part in a basic drama activity.
- 3) **Writing:** A freeze-frame can provide a useful context for the teacher to demonstrate clear links between the reader's response and the writer's skill. The freeze-frame can also provide a context for writing in role. The process of moving from a whole class freeze-frame to shared or individual writing in role involves the following 3 stages:
 - **Visualise and Analyse:** The freeze-frame provides a visual focus for discussion and analysis of texts. It works to stimulate pupils' interior visualisation of the events in the text by gradually clawing the moment from the page and making it tangible. Once pupils can see the moment depicted, they are better able to speculate on the feelings of the characters and discuss the issues involved. They are also more inclined to search through the text for evidence to justify their views. The freeze-frame activity can sometimes be preceded by an opportunity for the pupils to make their own personal responses to the moment in the text, in terms of what they imagine they can see, feel, sense and connect with, as they read the text. This encourages pupils to formulate their own opinions, which will enrich and feed into the corporate analysis of the freeze-frame and support the planning of any subsequent writing in role.
 - **Respond and Communicate:** The whole class discussion about the thoughts and feelings of the characters in the freeze-frame provides a model for pupils to formulate their own written responses as eyewitnesses, or characters. Since pupils learn from each other, their initial responses are further reinforced if they are given the opportunity to take time out during the discussion to communicate their responses to a partner.
 - **Rehearse, draft and write:** After engaging with the characters in the text, pupils can orally rehearse and then draft a piece of individual writing in role, either as one of the characters or as an eye-witness to the depicted event. Pupils can then concentrate on word and sentence level issues to complete the writing process.
- 4) **Cross curricular links:** Freeze-frames can support different areas of the curriculum such as History, Art and PSHE, through isolating moments, events and issues, so pupils can explore/analyse them in more depth.

HOW IS THE FREEZE-FRAME STRATEGY TAUGHT? (English example)

- Select a significant moment from a text for discussion and analysis. Select a moment involving 2-6 characters. Introduce the concept as being similar to a pause on a moving image or an illustration
- Invite individual pupils to stand at the front of the class to represent the characters. Use a small prop or one simple item of costume to identify each character;
- Taking each character in turn, ask the class where each character is likely to be looking and why. Provide 2-3 alternative directions with reasons, for each character, if appropriate. Request or discuss evidence from the text to back up opinions. Then select an appropriate orientation for each character;
- Make a draft freeze-frame to show the agreed positions of the characters;

THEN SELECT OR COMBINE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **THOUGHT BUBBLES:** Taking each character in turn, hold a cardboard **thought bubble** over their heads and ask the class what each character might be thinking. Seek at least two alternative thoughts for each character and ask the character/ or the class to select one from the suggestions. Write the final thoughts in the bubbles;

- Make the freeze-frame and ask each character to voice their thoughts, as agreed by the class. Alternatively invite other pupils to voice the characters' thoughts on their behalf by standing behind the characters in the freeze-frame, or ask the class to read the thoughts from the bubbles in chorus;
- **FEELINGS HEARTS:** Repeat the thought bubble process with a heart shaped outline to indicate each character's feelings; **KS1 Version:** - Ask all pupils to invent and demonstrate an action to indicate each feeling. Explain that this is in order to help the character know how to act the part. Take this opportunity to point out that different characters have different feelings.
- **KS2/3** - Ask some pupils to pass comments on each character from the *readers'* perspective. Then ask the class to identify aspects of the text that are responsible for giving the reader these perspectives. Then ask the class to identify what the author has written to influence pupils' interpretation of the text as expressed in the freeze-frame. Develop this into a discussion about the author's perspective and different characters' perspectives on the same moment.
- **KS2/3** Bring **writing** into the freeze by asking pupils to suggest what piece of writing each character may have on their person or nearby. This could be anything from a letter, magazine, book, leaflet, instructions or poster to a shopping list. Pupils can be asked to create these pieces of writing. They can work in groups to produce one piece of writing for each character. Make the freeze-frame again and give each character one of the pieces of writing. Then taking each character in turn, read the pieces of writing aloud to the class or ask the character to read their own.

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