

Speaking and Listening: Lesson Ideas © Lorraine S Harrison

1) HAMELIN EYE WITNESS TELLS ALL

Year 3/4 Objectives

Speaking: choose and prepare poems or stories for performance, identifying appropriate expression, tone, volume and use of voices and other sounds

Drama:

- Use some drama strategies to explore stories or issues
- (Potential link) develop scripts based on improvisation

Listening and responding: listen to a speaker, make notes and use the notes to develop a role-play.

Resources

- resource sheet 7 and/or a recording of resource sheet 7
- a version of the poem *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* by Robert Browning for reference
- pictures of medieval towns and townspeople
- note paper and pencils for each child

Organisation/ /strategy

- small socially cohesive groups
- freeze-frame drama strategy

Introduction

- Explain that you would like the children to work towards performing a role-play about what happened to some medieval townspeople who lived long ago in a town called Hamelin.
- To support the role-play, show the pictures of a medieval town. Give groups or response partners a short time to consider a response to the following question: *What can you tell about daily life from these pictures? How would it be different from life today?* Then nominate a few children to share their responses.
- Explain that although the town was full of people, it was a peaceful place, until something terrible happened.
- Explain that they will need to listen to an imaginary letter from one of the townspeople to find out what happened.

Main activity

- Tell the children to make notes on what they hear, to inform their role-play.
- Read out and/or play the recording of the letter on Resource sheet 7. Speak naturally but clearly, giving children time to take notes.
- Provide some prompts about note taking, with a few examples. Read the letter, or play the recording again, to give children a second chance to make notes.
- Divide the story into 5 sections for the role-play and share among the groups.

Section1) Life before the rats came 2) Townspeople meet the mayor 3) The Pied Piper meets the mayor 4) Townspeople talk after the rats have drowned 5) Townspeople talk after the children have gone.

- Ask each group to use their notes to plan and rehearse a short role-play representing their allocated section. The role-play should last no longer than 2-3 minutes. Ask them to start their role-plays with a freeze-frame that will come to life on the word *Action*.
- Invite each group to perform their role-play sections to the class. Show the sections in chronological order.

Summary/Plenary

- Give groups time to reflect on what worked well in their role-plays and what could be improved.
- Read the poem or sections of the poem to the children and discuss how well the events are reflected in their role-plays

Support

- Encourage children to make notes by drawing images of what they hear, as well as writing key words
- Pre teach any vocabulary that the children might not understand

Extension

- Ask children to be responsible for checking that their group's role-play reflects the notes they made.
- Encourage the use of mind mapping to record key concepts, words and phrases.

Assessment questions

- Do the children's notes reflect the key events in the story?
- Do the children make effective use of the notes for the role-play?

RESOURCE SHEET 7 © L S Harrison

HAMELIN EYE WITNESS TELLS ALL

Letter from an eye-witness living in the town of Hamelin

Dear children

I have to tell you about a terrible thing that happened in my town. The town is called Hamelin and it was quite a good place to live when I was young. My family owned the bakers' shop and we had to get up very early to bake the bread. It was hard work but at least it was peaceful and we had plenty to eat.

Then one day something terrible happened. Some rats came to the town. Just a few at first, then more and more came until there were more rats than people. Not just small rats! These were huge and very strong. They had sharp teeth and made loud squeaks. They were everywhere. They bit the babies in their cradles, drank the soup from the ladles before you could drink it. They chased away the cats and dogs. We found them in the bread bins, in the cupboards and even in the flour. They made so much noise with their squeaking that we couldn't hear each other speak. And at night it was worse!

We tried to trap them but they were too clever. We tried to throw water over them and frighten them away, but they were too brave. We didn't know what to do.

So, we went to see the Mayor and told him all about the rats. He said he would pay money to anyone who would get rid of the rats. He offered 1, 000 guilders as a reward. So, people tried even harder to catch the rats so they could win the reward, but nothing worked.

Then one day a strange man arrived in Hamelin. He was wearing brightly coloured clothes and he carried a pipe, like a flute. He said he would get rid of the rats to get the reward but no one believed him. Then a strange thing happened. As the man began to play music on his pipe, all the rats came out of the houses and started to follow him. We couldn't believe our eyes! He led them down to the river and all the rats jumped into the water and drowned. We all cheered we were so pleased. We called the man The Pied Piper and cheered him as he went to see the mayor to get his money.

We thought that was the end of a very bad time, but little did we know that our troubles would get worse. I was in the bakery when I heard shouting coming from the mayor's house. It was the Pied Piper! My sister told me that the mayor wouldn't pay him the money. He was very angry and said everyone would be sorry. Well it wasn't our fault the mayor didn't pay him! We felt sorry for him.

Later that day, he took his revenge. He played his pipe again, but this time it wasn't rats that followed him, it was all the little children in our village. We thought it was fun at first so we let the children go, but he took them to the mountains the other side of the river and they never came back. Not ever. My little sister was only 8 years old when she left. We don't know where he took them, but some people say he took them right inside the mountain, where they can never return.

Some people say the Pied Piper was a bad man but I blame the mayor – he shouldn't have gone back on his promise. There are no children left in our village now and everyone is sad.

I must go now. Thank you for listening to my story. I hope no one will ever forget what happened to us.

Yours truly Maria Baker

Adaptations/suggestions

- Read the poem to the children again and use shared writing to compose a letter from the mayor to the townspeople, giving his side of the story. Then ask some pairs to write a letter from the Pied Piper, giving his perspective on the events and some pairs to write a letter from the townspeople to the mayor, giving theirs.
- Pairs or groups of children could compose a similar letter from a character from another narrative poem or story. The class could listen to the letter and take notes for a role-play.
- Use teacher-in-role to play the part of someone who knows one of the main characters in a class novel. Wear a scarf to signify when you are in role. Talk about a key incident from the novel and then answer any questions. Children should take notes in preparation for a role-play and/or freeze-frame based on the incident.

2) THE PIED PIPER: from role-play to script © L S Harrison

This work is designed to follow on from the improvised role-plays in *Hamelin eye witness tells all*.

However, the strategies can be adapted to suit different contents.

Objectives

Speaking: choose and prepare poems or stories for performance, identifying appropriate expression, tone, volume and use of voices and other sounds

Drama:

- present events and characters through dialogue to engage the interest of an audience.
- Develop scripts based on improvisation

Resources

One copy of a simple play script (or part of a script) per pair of children.

Organisation

Sub divide the groups used in the previous role-play lesson, into pairs or threes.

Introduction

- Explain that the children will need note-taking skills to develop their role-plays into play scripts, for another class to perform.
- Give children a few moments to consider why we need stage directions when people are performing a scripted role-play that they have never seen or been involved in. Then nominate children to answer.
- Allow groups a few minutes to discuss any small changes they may want to make to their role-play to make it more suited to a script. Take feedback on some suggested changes and invite comments.

Main activity

- Split each group into pairs (or threes), to write different scripted versions of their group role-play. Allow pairs time to make notes on which parts of their role-play they will use in their scripted version.
- Give each pair a sample of a play script as a model to refer to. Suggest that they keep sentences clearly defined, using a new line each time a different person speaks. Remind them about any stage directions and other conventions of script writing, such as a list of characters and any props or furniture. Suggest that they keep the scripted version fairly short, so it lasts about a minute or two.
- Pairs should produce one script between them, taking turns to write the lines.

Teaching tip: When the children have started to write some of their script, stop the task and ask them to read what they have written so far to another pair. They could receive feedback and make changes in the light of the feedback if appropriate.

Summary/Plenary

- Ask each pair to read out a couple of lines from their scripts
- Ask if children feel that it is easier to develop a script from an improvised role-play, rather than from a story or an idea
- Plan to ask another class to perform some of the scripts.

Support

- An adult or a child who is a confident writer, to act as scribe.
- Access to a computer.
- Employ guided writing as a strategy for a less confident group

Extension

- Add another scene that occurred before or after the original role-play
- Make notes of suggestions for performing on a stage, with ideas for lighting, props, costume and set.

Assessment

- Are children able to adapt their role-plays to accommodate the different needs presented by a script?
- Do the children's scripts demonstrate a developing understanding of the conventions of script writing?

Adaptations/further suggestions

- Allow some or all of the children to type up their scripts on a computer. They could add any relevant information, images or illustrations. Make the scripts into a book of short plays for the class bookshelf and then make a copy for the school library.
- Select scripts that could be performed as radio plays. Record some children reading these scripts. Keep in the library as a collection of radio plays.
- Play the part of an actor on stage engaged in non-verbal activities that would require stage directions in a script. For example, sit on a chair, read a paper, stir a drink, look nervously at your watch. Write the start of the stage directions on the board before you play the part. For example, you could write *Jo walked into the room and ...* The children should make notes as you perform so that they can complete the stage directions when you have finished. Children could then take turns to be the actor using different actions each time.
- Ask a confident group to perform their improvised role-play to the whole class. Then model how to start the process of developing the role-play into a script. Make clear notes on a flipchart as you go. Use discussion and shared writing to start to convert your notes into a script. Script the first few lines and then ask some children to perform them to test them out. Ask the class to use your notes to complete the rest of the script in pairs.
- Create a listening corner to accommodate a small group. Record children reading some of the play scripts and provide headphones for the children to listen to them. Typed copies of the play scripts can be made available, so the children can follow the scripts as they listen.

WAR TIME ROLE PLAY Years 3/4 © L S Harrison

Objectives

Drama:

- present events and characters through dialogue to engage the interest of an audience
- use some drama strategies to explore stories or issues

Listening and responding: listen to a speaker, make notes and use the notes to develop a role-play

Cross-curricular links: The Second World War
What was life like for children in the Second World War?
What was it like to be an evacuee?

Preparation

Prepare or organise a talk for the children about evacuees, using appropriate illustrations and objects if available.

Resources

- A photograph of evacuees
- Space for groups to improvise
- One sheet of paper (A4 or A3) per child
- A digital camera (optional)

Organisation/strategy

- Small groups
- Freeze-frames drama strategy

Introduction

- Explain to the children that they will need to listen to some information so that groups can perform role- plays. Tell the children that they will need to take notes as they listen.
- Explain that the talk and the role –play will be about something that happened to some children during the Second World War.
- Explain any subject specific vocabulary that they will hear in the talk e.g. *billeting officers, evacuees, air raid wardens, shelters, blackouts, host families.*

Main activity

- Remind the children what they have to remember about taking notes.
- Ask the children to divide their sheet of paper into three sections, with sections labelled as follows 1) Images.2) Feelings. 3) Facts. Ask them to fill in the sections as they listen. For Images they should make quick sketches and for Feelings and Facts they should use words. Children should be told that they will be allowed a short time to finish filling in the sections after the talk. Groups can briefly compare papers after the talk.

- Allow children to listen to the prepared talk about why children were evacuated and what happened to some of the evacuees during the war. Ensure that the talk includes the perspectives of the host families and the issues about evacuees starting a new school.
- Set up an imaginary situation of a group of evacuees arriving for their first day at school, watched by the village children. Select some children to make a freeze-frame of this situation and ask the class to speculate on their thoughts and feelings.
- Ask all the groups to use this freeze frame as the start of their role-play. They should come to life for one to two minutes then finish with another freeze-frame.

Summary/Plenary

- Invite each group to perform their role-play in turn. Take a photograph of each freeze-frame if appropriate.
- Discuss links to the information presented in the talk and praise evidence of good listening.
- Ask children to comment on how their notes helped them to create their role-plays.

Support

- Allow less confident groups to base their role-play on an old photograph. Start with a freeze frame of the photograph and then bring it to life.

Extension

- Ask groups of confident children to select an appropriate moment within their role-play to freeze the action again, so that characters can speak their thoughts out loud.

Assessment questions

- How confident are the children in taking notes?
- How accurate are the notes?
- Look for evidence of good listening in the role-plays.

Adaptations/further suggestions

- Children could make notes on information about evacuees from the Internet and from books, to supplement their original notes. This information could be made into a leaflet for a museum called *Facts and Feelings About Evacuees*. The leaflet can be made up of bullet points of information based on their notes, together with phrases to express their own thoughts and impressions. Digital images of the freeze-frames can be included with the pieces of information to create the best effect. The leaflet should present information in note form and could include digital images of the role-plays.
- Invite someone who was alive during the war to talk to the children about their childhood and ask children to record the talk. Play the recording again just

before the children prepare their role-plays, to encourage them to add extra detail and authenticity to their work.

- Read out a short passage about evacuees from a historical novel, such as the opening pages of *Goodnight Mr Tom* by Michelle Magorian. Use this as an extra stimulus for the role-play.
- Bring in some wartime toys and ask groups to mention one of them during their role-play.
- Collect details of a number of outdoor games that would be familiar to wartime children, such as hopscotch, circle games and skipping games. Invite the children to take notes as you explain how to play each game in turn. Divide the class into small groups and give each group a game. Ask groups to devise a role-play about wartime children explaining the rules of their game to a new child and then playing the game. They should use mime rather than use real equipment such as ropes or balls.
- Ask the children to help you to prepare a class talk for assembly on how things have changed for children since the war. Groups could perform freeze-frames of their role- plays to supplement the talk. The focus could then move to how children enjoyed playing simple playground games, which still have value today. You could ask some children to demonstrate a wartime game such as hopscotch and suggest that some might try playing it at playtime.

WAR TIME SCRIPTS

This work is designed to follow on from the improvised role- plays in *War Time Role Play* by L S Harrison

Objectives

Drama:

- present events and characters through dialogue to engage the interest of an audience
- develop scripts based on improvisation

Cross-curricular links: The Second World War

What was life like for children in the Second World War?

What was it like to be an evacuee?

Resources: One copy of a simple play script (or part of a script) per pair of children.

Organisation: Sub divide the groups used in the previous role-play lesson on War Time Role Plays into pairs or threes.

Introduction

- Ask the children to develop their War time role-plays into play scripts. These will be performed either in an assembly or to each other in a subsequent lesson.
- Use the play script examples to remind them how a script is set out.
- Discuss the main differences between planning and performing an improvised role- play situation, and writing and performing a script?
- Allow children a few minutes in their role-play groups to discuss what features they may like to retain in their scripted version.

Main activity

- Split each group into pairs or threes, to write different scripted versions of their group role-plays. Pairs should produce one script between them, taking turns to be the scribe.
- Make it clear that pairs can adapt their original role-play to suit a scripted version, but should try to keep to the same situation and storyline. Suggest that they aim to make their scripted version last between 1-2 minutes.
- When pairs have completed a rough draft of their scripts, they should time themselves as they quietly read out their lines and adjust if necessary.
- (Optional) Children can give their draft scripts to other pairs to check for clarity.
- Encourage children to write some stage directions in their scripts, to include some actions and feelings as well as words. Make up your own, or use the following: .

Irene (*nervously playing with her hair*)

I'm scared that the teachers will think all evacuees are bad.

Kate (*putting her arm round Irene*)

Well we don't think you're bad! Would you like to play skipping with us at playtime?

Summary/Plenary

- Select one script from each role-play group to read to the class. Then ask the role-play group to comment on how the scripted version differs from their improvised version.
- Ask pairs which versions best shows what it felt like to be an evacuee.

Support

- Put less confident pairs together to form a guided writing group
- Sketch the opening freeze-frame from the role-play and add speech bubbles. Then convert these into a script.

Extension

- Ask children to incorporate more historical facts in the scripted version
- Adapt the script to produce a version for a radio recording.

Assessment questions

- Can the children appreciate the key differences between devising an improvised role-play and writing a script?
- Can the children incorporate the key features of their role-play into script form?

Adaptations/further suggestions

- Allow pairs to type up their scripts or ask them to make neat handwritten copies. Make the scripts into a book of plays entitled *What Was It Like For Children In The Second World War?*
- Ask each pair to design a flier or newspaper advertisement, recommending a performance of their play to school parties who are studying the Second World War.
- Devise a short questionnaire to encourage children to compare the experience of devising an improvisation to producing a script.
- Stand at the front of the room and make the following statement: *Planning an improvisation is easier than writing a script.* Ask those children who completely agree with the statement to stand in front of you. Those who completely disagree should stand at the back of the room, and those who feel they are equally difficult should stand in the middle of the room. Then ask some children why they chose to stand where they did. Repeat with a second statement: *Scripted plays are easier to perform than improvised role-plays.*
- Select one or two scripts for some of the children to learn by heart. Others can act as directors, or be responsible for the costumes, props, introductory music and a simple set. Organise an assembly on the theme of how prejudice against newcomers is often based on ignorance and rumours. Relate this to the experience of some evacuees in the Second World War. Conclude by asking the children to perform their learned scripts.