Melodrama

Part 1 - Background and structure

Duration: 1 week

Driving question

How are melodramas structured to ensure they are easy to understand?

Overview

Students are introduced and to this socio-cultural context of Melodrama, key terms and the structure of traditional melodramas. Through practical and theoretical tasks students write and devise a traditional melodrama within this sequence and begin to understand the role and function of asides.

| Stage 4 outcomes | Stage 5 outcomes |
| --- | --- |
| A student: | A student: |
| 4.1.2 improvises and playbuilds through group-devised processes | 5.1.2 contributes, selects, develops and structures ideas in improvisation and playbuilding |
| 4.1.3 devises and enacts drama using scripted and unscripted material | 5.1.3 devises, interprets and enacts drama using scripted and unscripted material or text |
| 4.3.3 describes the contribution of individuals and groups in drama using relevant drama terminology | 5.3.3 analyses and evaluates the contribution of individuals and groups to processes and performances in drama using relevant drama concepts and terminology |

[Drama 7-10 Syllabus](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/drama-7-10-syllabus) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2003.

Content

Melodrama developed as a theatrical form in the 19th century in France and quickly became the dominant theatre form in Western culture for the next century. Its primary purpose was to entertain and enabled form escapism for the middle and lower class people who were experiencing long working hours and poor conditions. They used simple plot-lines, exaggerated characters, music and spectacular effects to heighten emotional impact on the audience. As time has progressed, contemporary melodramas are evident in daytime television series such as the *Bold and the Beautiful, Neighbours* and *Home and Away*.

|  |
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| Cross-curriculum content and key competencies |
| Information and communications technology |
| Literacy |
| Gender |
| Civics and Citizenship |

Embedded elements of drama

* Structure
* Role & Character
* Time
* Place
* Situation
* Audience Engagement

Assessment

All activities require students to demonstrate their learning and are all assessment for learning activities.

Teaching and learning activities

The following learning experiences are structured to provide students with a practical and theoretical understanding of Political theatre.

Key term match-up

Scatter **key terms in melodrama cards** on the floor throughout the classroom.

Students will:

* review the words and definitions provided on the cards
* work in small groups to match the appropriate terms and definitions
* when matched correctly, place key terms and definitions next to each other on the classroom wall so they can be used throughout the unit of work
* discuss any new terms or unfamiliar terms with students modelling fluency and pronunciation
* copy definitions and terms into their books as a ‘glossary’ that can be used throughout the term.

Read & answer

Provide students with a copy of the **Overview of melodrama handout** and load the Melodrama Overview quiz by copying and pasting the following URL into your browser (please note-clicking on this a direct think does not work) https://play.kahoot.it/#/?quizId=7555c052-757f-4f04-970e-6c68c39c21bd .

Students will:

* read the information provided and paste it in their book
* log onto their devices and go to [www.kahoot.com](http://www.kahoot.com)
* use the quiz ID number and load the quiz
* complete the quiz
* discuss the answers.

Group devising

In this task, students will apply their understanding of the structure of traditional melodramas and begin to stage their own.

Students will:

* devise four separate scenes based on the melodrama structure **in the handout**
* present their scenes to the class
* review their peers scenes by commenting on the structure, characters and their actions
* return to devising, this time focusing on managing smooth and theatrical transitions to ensure the rhythm of the production is not interrupted. This time students may add music, movement, lighting and sound
* after a significant amount of rehearsal time, form an audience
* discuss appropriate audience behaviour as a class
* present their performances
* provide feedback to each other using the elements of drama as a toolbox for analysis
* write a written review of their favourite performance in their logbook.

Research and reflect

Students will:

* respond to the following reflection question in their logbook
  + Write a plot outline for a modern Australian melodrama.
  + Use the internet to research traditional Australian melodrama. How similar were the stock characters you created? Summarise the main differences between the traditional and your contemporary characters
  + Melodramas often deal with simple moral concepts such as good versus evil, with good often prevailing over evil. Is this an accurate reflection of Australia?.

Differentiation

Extension

Students could:

* create their own Kahoot questions and answers
* film their performances and convert them into a short film
* debate whether the male and female gender roles that exist within melodrama are an accurate reflection of contemporary gender roles in Australia.

Life skills activity

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| --- |
| Life skills outcomes |
| A student: |
| LS 1.3 participates in drama experiences in which role-taking is used to enhance their understanding of ideas and feelings. |
| LS 3.3 recognises that drama and theatre performances can communicate meaning and ideas. |

[Drama 7-10 Syllabus](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/drama-7-10-syllabus) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2003.

Students could:

* watch a [Muppet Melodrama](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gw-W48n06Lw) (00:03:09) discuss how the audience might respond to different situations. While watching it a second time, ask students to use [cue cards](http://www.heroandvillain.com/pdf/CueCards.pdf) to identify the appropriate responses.

Evaluate

Feedback is formative during the lessons.

Reference list and resources

**Handout: Key terms in melodrama**

Melodrama overview Kahoot quiz (copy and paste this link into your browser directly) - https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/7555c052-757f-4f04-970e-6c68c39c21bd

Muppet Melodrama, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gw-W48n06Lw>, date accessed 05/04/2018.

Melodrama cue cards, <http://www.heroandvillain.com/pdf/CueCards.pdf> date accessed 05/04/2018.

[Drama 7-10 Syllabus](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/drama-7-10-syllabus) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2003.