Melodrama

3. Voices and asides

Duration: 2 weeks

Overview

Within this sequence, students understand through practical exploration how to manipulate their voice and movement to create stock characters and perform asides. They then apply this knowledge to devise and perform a short monologue based on the character Syndrome from The Incredibles.

| Stage 4 outcomes | Stage 5 outcomes |
| --- | --- |
| A student: | A student: |
| 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 |
| 4.2.1 uses performance skills to communicate dramatic meaning | 5.2.1 applies acting and performance techniques expressively and collaboratively to communicate dramatic meaning |
| 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 a 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 have emerged through superhero films such as: Batman, Superman and Catwoman. While the acting style is subtler and the narratives are seemingly more complicated, the stock character continue to be exaggerated and, at times, clichéd.

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| Cross-curriculum content and key competencies |
| Information and communications technology |

Embedded elements of drama

* Role & Character
* Audience Engagement
* Tension
* Sound
* Language

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 skills and knowledge in manipulating their voice as performers.

Playing with emphasis & exageration

Prior to this task it is beneficial to participate in a range of vocal warm ups, that focus on: preparing the students’ voice for performance, projection and articulation. To guide student learning in this task, please review slide two of the **Melodrama – voice PowerPoint.**

Students will:

* experiment with the delivery of common lines of dialogue in melodrama by using the phonetic spelling presented as outlined on slides 3-5 of the **Melodrama – voice PowerPoint**
* consider how the change of emphasis changes the way the line is perceived by the audience.

Famous last words

Scatter [Famous Last Words, death bed statements](http://www.heroandvillain.com/pdf/FamousLastWords.pdf) on the floor throughout the classroom.

Students will:

* move through the classroom in neutral, finding focus
* on a given cue from their teacher pick up the quote closest to them and present the line as melodramatically as possible to the nearest person to them, particularly focusing on how they are manipulating their voice
* repeat this process multiple times until students have performed a range of lines of dialogue
* discuss how they manipulated their voice, common answers might include: tempo, emphasis, tone, pitch, accent, duration.

Explain to students that, like movement in melodrama, the performer’s voice is also heightened and exaggerated.

Aside

Provide students with a copy of **You caught memonologuing** handout.

Students will:

* review the information provided on slide 7 of the Monologue – VoicePowerpoint and summarise in their logbooks
* watch the [Syndrome’ monologue](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRlh_w6uRds) on YouTube
* rehearse and perform the monologue adding an aside at an appropriate time in the performance
* present the short monologue to the class for feedback.

Reflection

Students respond to the following reflection question in paragraph form in their logbooks ‘When delivering an aside how did you use body language and voice to create a feeling of secrecy? How did this change the character’s relationship with the audience?’ Encourage students to use examples from their own performances or performances they have seen to support their response.

Differentiation

Extension

Students could:

* add gestures and movement to the lines of dialogues in tasks one and two
* write and record a short radio play that requires them to manipulate and use their voice
* record a video their monologue and analyse their performance using the elements of drama as a toolbox for analysis.

Life skills

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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:

* use voice changing applications to experiment with voice manipulation and determine the type of stock character that might have this voice
* exaggerate single words to communicate a given emotion and then discuss how emotions are communicated
* compare and contrast how the voice changes when telling a secret to every day and conversation.

Evaluate

Feedback is formative during the lessons.

Reference list and resources

[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.

Famous Last Words, death bed statements <http://www.heroandvillain.com/pdf/FamousLastWords.pdf>, date accessed 05/04/18.

Handout - **You caught me monologuing**

PowerPoint: **Melodrama - voice**

Syndrome’s monologue <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRlh_w6uRds>, date accessed 05/04/18.