Writing Monologues

Jasper Jones

Duration: 5-6 weeks

Driving question

How do we create monologues based on characters in existing works? How are themes and issues communicated within a play? How can we communicate themes and issues within our work that reflect the socio-cultural context of contemporary Australia?

Overview

Students adopt the role of a playwright by writing a 4-6 minute monologue based on a character from [Jasper Jonesby Kate Mulvany](https://australianplays.org/script/CP-3125). Then consider how themes and issues are communicated through actions, situations, characters and dialogue and investigate the socio-cultural context of their work.

| Stage 4 outcomes | Stage 5 outcomes |
| --- | --- |
| A student: | A student: |
| 4.1.1 identifies and explores the elements of drama to develop belief and clarity in character, role, situation and action | 5.1.1 manipulates the elements of drama to create belief, clarity and tension in character, role, situation and action |
| 4.2.3 explores and uses aspects of dramatic forms, performance styles, theatrical conventions and technologies to create dramatic meaning | 5.2.3 employs a variety of dramatic forms, performance styles, dramatic techniques, theatrical conventions and technologies to create dramatic meaning. |
| 4.3.2 recognises the function of drama and theatre in reflecting social and cultural aspects of human experience | 5.3.2 analyses the contemporary and historical contexts of drama |

[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

Through workshop exercises, students gain an understanding of how to effectively structure a monologue to create a theatrical journey that will engage audiences. They will review and analyse existing monologues, discuss Freytag’s pyramid as a guide for writing character arcs, and explore how themes and issues are communicated in theatrical works. They will discuss ways of creating role/character and establishing time, place and situation.

| Cross-curriculum content and key competencies |
| --- |
| Information and communication technology |
| Literacy |
| Aboriginal & Indigenous |
| Civics & Citizenship |
| Difference & Diversity |

Embedded elements of drama

* Role and character
* Structure
* Moment
* Time and place
* Audience Engagement
* Dramatic Meaning

Assessment

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

Teaching and learning activities

The following learning experiences will guide students to structuring a monologue based on a character from the play [Jasper Jones by Kate Mulvany.](https://australianplays.org/script/CP-3125)

Brainstorm

Review slide 2 of the **Writing monologues PowerPoint** and then go to the [OffStage YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrePVYlbJQG_DAIbOH5iapA/feed) and as a class watch sample Monologues.

Students will:

* brainstorm what was entertaining about each monologue
* discuss as a class their findings and add to their brainstorm.

Throughout this task, it is beneficial to highlight to students the importance of having 3-dimensional, engaging characters and a theatrical journey.

Prediction bingo

Provide students with a copy of [Jasper Jones by Kate Mulvany.](https://australianplays.org/script/CP-3125)

Students will:

* scan or skim through the text and write down predictions (words or statements) on the [Prediction Bingo handout (PDF 3.09MB).](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/de072a20-4cb0-43fe-a9ee-aae70e49fbf8/1/kascasequences-drama-prediction-bingo.pdf) Clues might be more obvious such as “there will be a character called Jasper Jones” or more complex such as “it will themes and issues such as racism”
* discuss what led them to these predictions (e.g. visual images, quotes from the text, the title, etc)
* begin reading as a class, as the text is read, highlight each of their predictions as they come true.

Reflecting on the text

Students will:

* review and summarise the information on slide 6-8
* discuss the relevance of the theme ‘sorry’ for both 1960s rural Australia and contemporary Australia
* complete the themes and issues table on slide 9.

Finding the right character

Students will:

* Identify two characters they connected with or were intrigued by while reading the play *Jasper Jones.*
* use their logbooks to respond to the following questions:
  + what is the character’s name? Age? Distinguishing features?
  + how does this character’s journey provide an engaging character and story for the audience?
  + how does this character’s journey highlight YOUR skills as an actor? Does it provide emotional variety?
* discuss which character would be better for them to play and justify their reason.

Freytag’s Pyramid

Guide students through the information on the **Structuring Stories handout**. Then, divide students into pairs/groups and allocate each group a scene from the text.

Students will:

* identify or create a character arc using Freytag’s pyramid as a guiding structure.
* discuss why Freytag’s pyramid is useful when structuring stories and how it might be applied when they are devising their work.

Establishing time, place and situation

Students will:

* review the information provided on slide 12 of the **Writing monologues PowerPoint**
* address the contextual questions on slide 13 of the **Writing monologues Powerpoint.**

These questions will force students to address and define the contextual information for their monologue, which will assist them in the writing process.

Scriptwriting

Students will:

* review and summarise the key information provided on slides 14 and 15 of the **Writing monologues PowerPoint**
* begin writing monologues based on the experiences of the selected character from Jasper Jones
* encourage students to share their work with their peers.

Reflection

Students will:

* respond to the reflective questions:
  + There are many relevant themes and issues within the play *Jasper Jones*. How were these communicated in your monologue?
  + *Jasper Jones* comments on racism in 1960s rural Australia. Describe why these themes are relevant today and the action we can take to embrace diversity.
* encourage students to use their workshop experiences to support their findings.

Differentiation

Extension

Students could:

* students perform their monologues
* students writing a monologue for the same event from the perspective of a different character (for example, writing the moment Charlie see’s Laura’s body from the perspective of Jasper).

Life skills

|  |
| --- |
| 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. 3.1 experiences a variety of drama or theatre performances. |

[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:

* creates a 100 word monologue
* writes a diary letter from the perspective of a character
* watch the film version of Jasper Jones.

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.

Jasper Jones by Kate Mulvany.

[OffStage YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrePVYlbJQG_DAIbOH5iapA/feed)

Prediction Bingo Worksheet.

Structuring Stories handout

Writing Monologues PowerPoint