

Key Concepts

Based on the *California State VAPA Standards*
(found in the *Core Learnings* at the end of this section)

Kindergarten Theatre

Vocabulary: actor, character, setting, cooperation, audience, pantomime, dramatize

Skills and Knowledge: name, identify, distinguish, create, demonstrate, use

Use Vocabulary to describe theatrical experiences 1.1

- Differentiate between a live performance and a narrative.
- Distinguish between an actor and a character.
- Identify the setting or where a story takes place (e.g., a firehouse, restaurant, grandma's kitchen, dungeon, etc.).
- Explain how actors use their voices, bodies and facial expressions, how they listen and respond and use their memory of past experiences to portray a character in a story.

Perform imitative movements, rhythmical activities, and theatre games (e.g., freeze, statues, and mirrors) 2.1, 5.1

- Follow, mirror, and imitate movement shapes, vocal sounds and directions
- Identify and move like a variety of characters (e.g., police officer, firefighter, nurse, etc.) or animals
- Maintain steady beat while reciting nursery rhymes
- Echo clap, pat, and say simple rhythms
- Follow and perform basic rules of a theatre game
- Create dramatizations to solve problems in other subject areas
- Pantomime (act out)

Retell familiar stories, fables, fairy tales 2.2, 3.1

- Perform group pantomimes and improvisations.
- Create body movements that match stories while they are being read or told.
- Cooperate as a group to sequence events and retell stories through voice and body movement.
- Compare stories, fables, and fairy tales from different cultures that have similar story lines or morals.
- Act out two different versions of a story, fable or fairy tale in different settings including time and place.

Respond appropriately to a theatrical experience as an audience member 4.1

- Identify moments in a theatrical production that illicit a response (e.g., boo the villain, laugh at the clown, sit quietly, applaud).

THE THEATRE CLASSROOM

Exercise control over your actions and emotions.

- Emphasize the need to focus and concentrate on drama topics in class.
- Facilitate a creative environment by using pairing and small groupings.
- Allow for plenty of space in which to conduct games and activities.
- Use the word “freeze” to begin or end an activity then wait for all to freeze.
- Use a control device such as a bell, whistle, drum, etc. to get students’ attention, take positions, etc.
- Use repetition and mimicking so that students will internalize concepts.
- Use a slow, calm, and low voice to present an idea and refocus student’s actions.
- Have students practice running, skipping, walking, climbing, prancing, leaping, etc. in place to control activity and movement.
- Teach slow motion and exaggerated gestures to calm student activity.
- Use pantomime techniques to control loud vocal outbursts in dramatizations.
- Perform collapse and falling movements in slow motion to reduce the risk of injury.
- After a dramatization is complete, have a plan to focus audience and actors to listen and get ready for the next dramatization.
- Ask actors to sit down in place while you or the audience is giving comments.
- Keep peer evaluation positive.
- When control issues arrive, ask students to reflect on what could be done in the future to exercise more control.
- Create other strategies that manage the “chaos” that comes with dramatic play.

Use voice and movement expressively and safely

- Provide or create ample space in which students may move and play.
- Divide students into small practice groups.
- Encourage the use of practicing opposite, reverse or contradictory actions so students will better understand contrast.
- Model expressive voice and body movement and encourage similar mimicking and repetition.
- Use imagery, voice and language to inspire students to act expressively.
- Challenge students to defend their dramatic intentions and artistic interpretations.
- Create opportunities for students to participate with you in front of the class.

Use listening and observation skills

- Ask students to recall what they saw, heard, felt, etc. immediately after a dramatization.
- Students practice being a good audience by watching quietly or responding appropriately during class demonstrations.
- Students practice the role of actor and audience as often as possible to reinforce both skills.
- Begin and end instruction and activities with a “freeze” followed by silence.
- Make signals for starting and stopping action, scenes, games, etc. clear and consistent for all students.
- Use side coaching and good questioning strategies.

Build social skills: trust cooperation and respect

- Work in a variety of groupings. (e.g., pairs, small and large groups).
- Encourage brainstorming, collaboration and input from all students.
- Allow students to make shared decisions with you and each other.

- Create a non-competitive environment where all students have a chance to explore and express themselves without ridicule or teasing.
- Allow mistakes to happen without retribution.
- Be willing to try new things.
- Use questions instead of comments to open up student creativity.

Believe you are the part you are playing

- Encourage creative dramatics and playing in the classroom
- Choose strong images to share with students.
- Picture books and use of language help students strongly identify with characters they are to play.
- Be a good role model when demonstrating vocal and physical skills to students. Be enthusiastic and realistic.
- Connect to past experiences and use the five senses: hear, see, touch, taste, smell
- Use constant reinforcement of student's acting believability.
- Use theatre language, smile and encourage students to share thoughts after dramatizations.
- Be quick to point out student's spontaneous gestures using theatre terms.