



**Creating a Process Drama**  
K-6  
Language Arts/Social Studies/Drama  
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**Objective:** This is a “how to” instruction guide for teachers who would like to create their own process drama. Process drama is easily linked to literature and social studies. This guide will help you find ways to use process drama strategies to engage your students in the subject matter.

**Materials:**

You will need a piece of literature or an event from history to base your drama on.

## Creating a Process Drama

Process drama is a way of delving more deeply into a subject or piece of literature. It helps the students develop a deeper understanding of the situations and characters. Choose a story or situation that requires the students to make difficult choices.

1. Choose an objective. Remember, drama always has to be about something, so why not cover another curriculum area?
2. Begin your process drama with a warm-up activity. The activity should support and help to lead into the process drama. It should be an activity that involves the entire class. Following the warm-up, lead a brief discussion about how it connects to the process drama. (If you need ideas for games, you can do an Internet search for theatre games.)
3. Use the “Process Drama Worksheet” to brainstorm ideas for which techniques to use. See how many you can list and then choose the ones that will best help you achieve your objective. Here are some definitions of some of the techniques used in process drama.
  - Improvisation - spontaneous role-playing with non-scripted lines.
  - Active Storytelling - the teacher reads or tells the story while students act it out.
  - Teacher in Role - the teacher takes on a role in order to help build the action and move the drama. The role may be low, medium or high profile.
  - Freeze-frame - the teacher freezes the action and, after looking at the picture created in the freeze-frame, describes what is happening at the moment
  - Still image/Tableau - the students create a picture representing an event in the drama.
  - Vignettes - a series of still images, representing different parts of a story.
  - Mantle of the expert - the students take on roles of various experts in their fields in order to advise the other characters in the drama.
  - Narration - the action is paused while the teacher narrates a portion of the story.
  - Thought-tracking - students are frozen in-role. When tapped on the shoulder by the teacher, they are to share what they are thinking.

- Hot-seating - the students, out of role, question the teacher or another student, in-role, to find out more information about the character or the situation they are in.
- Meetings (in-role) - the group comes together to discuss their situation and what they can do about it.
- Discussion (out of role) - lead by the teacher in order to track the actual feelings of the group and to allow them to share those thoughts and feelings with each other.
- Collective role play - several students play the same role at the same time in order to gain more insights into the character.
- Communal Voice - a group of students speak as one character, each taking a turn and building on what has already been said.
- Conscience alley - the group forms an alley. As the chosen character walks down the alley, the students become the conscience of the character and say what the character is thinking.
- Decision alley - same as above, only this time each side of the alley offers opposing reasons for a decision the character must make.
- Ritual - the group establishes and commits to an action which they wish to observe. It can be sealed with a vote and/or the signing of a document.
- Role on the Wall - Students write words or phrases that describe the character, usually on a cut out silhouette of the character.
- Telephone conversation - Students are paired up to act out telephone conversation between two of the characters.
- Speaking objects/Eye Witness/Eavesdropping - These are all means of adding new information from either inanimate objects or people who have seen or overheard what was going on. It is a means of getting a new perspective on what is happening.
- Guided visualization - the students close their eyes and picture the setting. Have them focus on what they see and what they hear. This is a good tool to combine with thought tracking. With their eyes still closed, tap a few students on the shoulder and have them say, "I see..." or "I hear..."
- Performance Carousel - students are divided into groups and given a portion of the story to act out. When the groups are ready, have the students sit in chronological order to act out each scene in turn. Each scene begins and ends with a still image. The next scene then comes and replaces the previous scene by tapping out the character they are portraying.
- Writing/Drawing in role - students draw, write diary or journal entries, letters, etc. as though they are the character.
- Writing/Drawing out of role - you may wish to have the students write the answer to a thought provoking question that helps them relate the characters and/or situations in the story to their own lives. They could draw pictures of their favorite characters or events.

4. Finish by evaluating the process drama with the students. Ask thought provoking questions about the activity. Try to find out what they gained from participating in it.

5. You may choose to do a more formal evaluation. Writing in or out of role is a good way of accomplishing this.

## Process Drama Worksheet

Improvisation:

Active Storytelling:

Teacher-in-Role:

Freeze Frame:

Still Image/Tableau:

Vignettes:

Mantle of the Expert:

Narration:

Thought-tracking/tapping in:

Hot-seating:

Meetings:

Discussion:

Collective Role Play:

Communal Voice:

Decision/Conscience Alley:

Ritual:

Role on the Wall:

Telephone Conversations:

Speaking objects:

Eavesdropping:

Eye-witness:

Guided Visualization:

Performance Carousel:

Writing /Drawing in role:

Writing/Drawing out of role: