



Showdown at Appalachian Farms

5th Grade

Science/Drama

by Linda Gold

Science Standard 5.1.3 Ask questions to plan and carry out investigations that provide evidence for the effects of weathering and the rate of erosion on the geosphere. Emphasize weathering and erosion by water, ice, wind, gravity, or vegetation.

Writing Standard 3b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

Drama, Standard 5.T.CR.6:

Develop dialogue and actions that focus on the development and resolution of dramatic conflicts.

Drama, Standard 5.T.P.2:

Perform as a productive and responsible member of an acting ensemble in both rehearsal and performance situations.

Standard 5.T.R.1:

Demonstrate audience skills of observing attentively and responding appropriately.

Objective: The students will demonstrate their understanding of erosion and weathering, and what can be done to slow it down, by writing and performing the ending of a play. The students must solve the problems presented in the first part of the play by coming up with ways to prevent or slow down erosion and weathering.

Materials:

You will need to make copies of the attached play.

Warm-up: Fruit Basket Variation

For this version of the game, we will be using three forces that cause weathering and erosion; wind, ice and water. One chair for each participant is placed in a circle. One player stands in the middle of the circle. This player does not have a chair. Assign each participant, including the player in the middle, to be either wind, ice or water. They will remain the same force throughout the game. Decide how each force will move and demonstrate the movements to the class. Explain to the students that their goal is to stay out of the middle. The goal of the person in the middle is to get out of the middle. The center person will call out a force and everyone who has been assigned that force will trade chairs. While they are trading chairs, the player in the middle will sit in one of their chairs, leaving a new player in the middle. If the player in the middle would like everyone to change places, they will say the word erosion. When erosion is called out, everyone must find a new seat. They are not allowed to move over just one seat. They must move at least two places. Players are also not allowed to return to the seat they were just in. However, they may return to that seat later in the game, if they choose. Some children love to be in the middle and will hang around the middle, waiting for everyone else to find a seat. I always add the rule that no one can be in the middle more than once. If they end up in the middle more than once, the teacher should choose someone to take their place. I do not allow the students to pick

someone. I have found that there are those who will hang around the middle so they can pick the next person!

Instruction:

Ask the students if they have ever heard of a Victorian melodrama. Explain that the word melo stands for melody or music. In a melodrama, there is usually music that accompanies certain characters. They may be familiar with Darth Vader's music in Star Wars or the music for the shark in Jaws. In a Victorian melodrama, the main characters have a musical theme. Every time the audience hears the theme, they are asked to cheer, boo, or sigh.

You may also want to discuss the forces that cause erosion and weathering and talk about ways to slow down these forces. Some examples might be building retaining walls, trenches, culverts and terraces, or planting trees and vegetation. If you would prefer to see what your students can come up with on their own, don't have this discussion until after they have performed their melodrama.

Victorian Melodrama: Showdown at Appalachian Farms

Choose some students to act out the first part of the play for the class. You may also want to select some students to be the kazoo chorus. These students will create musical themes for the characters. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the three problems; ice, wind or water. Have them write their portion of the play, coming up with an idea to solve their problem. Erro Shun can be given a line following each failed attempt to destroy the farm. Encourage them to add boos and cheers into their script. You may choose to have each student write down the script as you go along so that everyone has a copy when they are done. This will also help to keep all of the students involved in the writing. When they are done, give them time to practice at least once and then let them act out their portion for the class.

Evaluation/Discussion

Following each group, ask the audience how that group chose to solve the problem. Ask them if that was a realistic way to solve it. Ask for additional ideas of what they could have done. Discuss the effects of erosion and why it is important to try to slow it down. Talk about some real life examples when erosion caused a lot of damage or loss of life. Discussing the dust bowl of 1930's would add another curriculum connection.

Showdown at the Appalachian Farm

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Characters:

Stage Manager	Erro Shun
Grandma Appalachia	Icy Fingers
Sierra	Windy Ridge
Rocky	River Bend

Introduction: Stage manager enters, in front of the curtain.

Stage Manager: Welcome Ladies, Gentlemen and everyone else! The show you about to see is known as a Victorian Melodrama. In Victorian Melodrama, it is traditional to cheer the hero, boo the villain, and sigh when you see the sweet, young heroine. Let's introduce them to you now. Our hero is Rocky. Let's hear it for Rocky! (Rocky enters the stage and takes a bow to the audience's cheers. Hero music plays for his entrance.) Our sweet, young heroine is Sierra. Come on out here Sierra. (Sierra enters as the audience sighs. Heroine music plays for her entrance.) Isn't she sweet? And now for our villain, Mr. Erro Shun. (Erro enters to the audience's boos and looks threateningly at the audience. Villain music plays while he enters. All actors exit) We'll let them go backstage and finish getting ready. Just remember, whenever you hear their music during the show, please feel free to cheer, sigh or boo appropriately. And now we give you: Showdown at the Appalachian Farm.

Scene 1: *Grandma Appalachia's farmhouse. Grandma is sitting, resting her old bones. Sierra is cleaning. Sound crew plays Sierra's song and audience is encouraged to sigh.*

Grandma Appalachia: Sierra dear, come sit down. I have something important to discuss with you.

Sierra: *(sitting down)* What is it Grandma Appalachia?

Grandma Appalachia: As you know, I've lived a long, full life. I don't suppose I'll be around forever, so I want you to know that when I'm gone, the farm will be yours. You and Rocky can settle down here and raise up a strong family.

Sierra: Oh Grandma. You have always been too good to me.

Grandma Appalachia: There's something else you need to know. Mr. Shun has spent his life trying to get this property from me. He wants to open it up for cattle grazing. Those animals will destroy this land. Once the vegetation is gone, the wind will carry away the topsoil and the land won't be good for anything.

Sierra: Mr. Erro Shun?

Grandma Appalachia: Yes dear. Mr. Erro Shun. He has been beating on my door for as long as I can remember. I'll tell ya, he is wearing me down. I may not stand as tall as I used to but I'm still just as stubborn. I do not want to see that man own this property. Promise me you will never sell out to him.

Sierra: Oh you don't have to worry about me. That guy gives me the creeps. I saw him in town yesterday, talking to a couple of strangers. He smiled his slimy smile at me. It made my skin crawl.

Grandma Appalachia: A couple of strangers you say? I wonder what that scoundrel is up to now.

Scene 2: Erro Shun and his sidekicks, Icy Fingers, Windy Ridge and River Bend, are sitting around a table. Sound crew plays the villain music and the audience is encouraged to boo.

Erro Shun: I just got word that Appalachia plans on leaving the farm to her granddaughter when she dies. If I can get the old woman to give me Sierra's hand in marriage, we will not have to go through with all our plans. I'll just sit back until Grandma has ... an accident... *(evil laugh)* and the land will be mine. But just in case she refuses to give me what I want, let's go over the plan again.

Icy Fingers: I go first! I'll head up into the mountains that are just above Appalachian farms. There I will pour water into the cracks and freeze it with my icy fingers. As the ice expands, pieces of the mountain will break away and tumble down onto the farm, destroying the crops and maybe even the farmhouse.

Erro Shun: Yes Icy, yes. But if that doesn't work...

Windy Ridge: Then I take over. With all the crops gone, and nothing to hold the topsoil in place, I will come in and blow it all away. Nothing could be easier!

Erro Shun: Right you are Windy. But just in case that doesn't do the trick, River will be our last resort.

River Bend: I plan on sending a flood of water right through the property, causing ruts so deep she may fall in and get lost. They don't call me River Bend for nothin'.
(evil laugh)

Erro Shun: Hey! Evil laughs are my job, not yours.

River Bend: Oh, sorry boss. I guess I got carried away.

Erro Shun: Then we're all set. We'll meet at Appalachian Farms in the morning. Just the sight of you three should make Granny shake in her boots. *(evil laugh)*

River Bend: *(to Icy Fingers)* I think mine was better.

Icy Fingers: Ya, more sinister.

Erro Shun: What was that?

River Bend and Icy Fingers: Nothin' boss, nothin'.

Evil music plays as Arrow and the others exit. Audience is encouraged to boo.

Scene 3: Back at Grandma Appalachia's farmhouse. Grandma and Sierra are busy working in the house. We hear heroine music and the audience is encouraged to sigh. Next we hear a knock on the door. Sierra, thinking it is Rocky, rushes over to let him in and is surprised to see Erro Shun and his three sidekicks. We hear villain music and the audience is encouraged to boo.

Erro Shun: Sierra, how nice it is to see you.

Sierra *(disappointed)*: Oh! Hello Mr. Shun.

Erro Shun: Call me Erro, my dear.

Sierra: What can we do for you Mr. Shun?

Erro Shun: I need to speak with Appalachia. I have a deal that will be hard for her to resist.

Grandma Appalachia: Whatever it is you're trying to sell, I don't want it. Who are those no goods with you?

Erro Shun: These are my associates, Icy Fingers, Windy Ridge and River Bend. I assume you have heard of them.

Grandma Appalachia: Well of course I've heard of them. I wasn't born yesterday you know.

Icy Fingers: And neither were we!

Erro Shun: Chill out Icy. I'll handle this. I'm willing to make you a deal Appalachia. If you will give me Sierra's hand in marriage, I'll make these bad boys go away. If not...well...let's just say that your farm doesn't stand a chance.

Grandma Appalachia: If you think for one minute that I would even consider such a thing then you are a bigger idiot than I give you credit for. Get off my property Shun before I forget I'm a lady.

Erro Shun: You've made your choice Appalachia. Don't say you weren't warned.

Erro Shun, Icy Fingers, Wendy Ridge and River Bend all exit. Villain music plays and the audience is encouraged to boo. Rocky enters. Hero music is played and the audience is encouraged to cheer.

Sierra: Grandma, what are we going to do?

Grandma Appalachia: We'll think of something dear. *(Rocky knocks on the door. Grandma Appalachia opens it.)* I thought I told you...Oh! It's you Rocky.

Sierra: Rocky! *(Sierra runs to Rocky as though to hug him and they shake hands. Heroine music plays. Audience is encouraged to sigh.)*

Rocky: I just saw Erro Shun and his gang leaving here. What did they want?

Grandma Appalachia: They threatened to ruin my farm unless I consented to Shun marrying Sierra.

Rocky: Over my dead body! We'll find a way to stop the scoundrels.

Grandma Appalachia: I've learned the hard way that we can't completely stop Erro Shun but we can slow him down. Let's get to work.

FINISH THE SCRIPT. HOW CAN EROSION BE SLOWED DOWN? WRITE THOSE SOLUTIONS INTO THE SCRIPT AND HELP ROCKY SAVE THE DAY. REMEMBER, THE FIRST ATTACK WILL COME FROM ICY FINGERS, FOLLOWED BY WINDY RIDGE AND FINALLY RIVER BEND.