

The Recess Queen

Readers Theatre based on the book by Alexis O'Neill and Laura Huliska-Beith

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss authorial tone and the role of a narrator in a story.
- Convey elements of a story such as character, setting, and plot through a dramatic performance.
- Compare and contrast written text to a dramatic interpretation.
- Identify techniques used by actors and actresses to convey information to an audience.
- Use group discussion skills.
- Use oral presentation skills.

ENGAGE

1. Students are read the story "The Recess Queen" by Alexis O'Neill and Laura Huliska-Beith and are then asked to summarize what happened. Prompt questions include:
 - Where does the story take place?
 - Who is the narrator?
 - What characters are there in the story? How old are they?
 - What happens to the characters in the story?
 - Is Mean Jean a bully? What do the authors tell us about Mean Jean to make us think she is a bully?
 - How do the other kids at school feel about Mean Jean?
 - How does meeting Katie Sue change Mean Jean?
2. Students are then told that they will learn how to use acting to help retell the story. Students are asked how an actor or actress can use their body and/or voice to show the audience the character's thoughts, words and actions. Students will then practice expressing emotions as a group by using their voices and faces (ie: smiling, frowning, whispering, yelling, etc.).

BUILD KNOWLEDGE

1. Students are introduced to the basics of Readers Theatre, which includes covering expectations for behavior during the activity. Students are asked to make comparisons to how Readers Theatre is similar or different from doing a full play in the classroom.
2. Scripts are passed out with assigned parts and as a class the script is read together, stopping at any unfamiliar words to work on pronunciation. After reading the script, the students so summarize the text and how they think the characters look, sounds, and use their bodies.

APPLY

1. Students will then move to reading their parts only in the script. This will take at least two tries so students can comfortably read their part aloud.
2. After the reading, students will reflect on how their characters are feeling and will discuss how they can use their voices and expressive reading to better demonstrate the characterization.

REFLECT

1. Students will come back together for a discussion after the activity. Students will then reflect on what they experienced:
 - Was it the same as reading the text in a book? If not, why was it different?
 - What did they learn about the author and how they write?
 - How do they see the characters now? Is it the same as what they thought at the beginning of class? How is it different?

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MISSISSIPPI ENGLISH AND LANGUAGE ARTS FRAMEWORKS

2. The student will apply strategies and skills to comprehend, respond to, interpret, or evaluate a variety of texts of increasing levels of length, difficulty, and complexity.
 - a. The student will use text features, parts of a book, text structures, and genres to analyze text. (DOK 2)
 - 4) Genres – fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.
 - b. The student will analyze texts in order to identify, understand, infer, or synthesize information. (DOK 2)
 - 1) Answer literal and simple inferential who, what, when, where, why, how, and what if questions.
 - 2) Answer literal and simple inferential questions about main characters, settings, and events.
 - 3) Answer literal and simple inferential questions about characters' actions, motives, traits, and emotions.
 - 4) Identify the main idea and some details in narrative text or the topic and some details in informational text.
 - 5) Determine simple cause and effect relationships.
 - 6) Identify simple fact and opinion.
 - 7) Draw conclusions based on information from narrative and/or informational text.
 - 8) Identify and discuss the theme of a text.
 - c. The student will recognize or generate an appropriate summary or paraphrase of the events or ideas in text, citing text-based evidence. (DOK 2)
 - 1) Retell a story orally and in writing including characters, setting, problem, important events, and resolution.
 - 2) Arrange in sequential order a listing of events found in narrative and/or informational text.
 - d. The student will analyze, interpret, compare, or respond to increasingly complex literary text, literary nonfiction, and informational text, citing text-based evidence. (DOK 3)
 - 1) Interpret text through moving, drawing, speaking, acting, or singing.

MISSISSIPPI SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORKS

3. Understand the importance of individual actions and character traits that contribute to advancing civil/human rights.
 - c. Discuss the responsibilities of individuals in schools (e.g., respect for the rights and property of others, tolerance, honesty, self-control, compassion, participation in the democratic process, work for the common good, fairness, etc.). (DOK 2)

MISSISSIPPI THEATRE FRAMEWORKS

1. Plan and record improvisations based on personal experience, heritage, imagination, literature, and history. (CP, HC, C)
 - a. Create real and imaginary scenes with a beginning, middle, and end from life experience, diverse cultures, times, and places in guided dramatic play.
 2. Act by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations.
 - b. Develop expressive use of voice.
 - d. Use skills in pantomime, tableau, and improvisation to create characters and to demonstrate their feelings, relationships, and environments.

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COMMON CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

1. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
4. Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.
5. Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
6. Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
7. Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Speaking and Listening Standards

1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
 - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
 - b. Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
 - c. Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
2. Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.
4. Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
5. Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

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Characters: Mean Jean Katie Sue Narrator Student 1
 Student 2 Student 3

ALL: Mean Jean was The Recess Queen!

Mean Jean: And nobody said any different!

Narrator: If kids ever crossed her, she'd push them!

Student 1: Smoosh them!

Student 2: Hammer them!

Student 3: Slammer them!

Mean Jean: Say what?

ALL: Jean growled.

Mean Jean: Say who?

ALL: Jean howled.

Mean Jean: Say you!

ALL: Who do you think you're talking to?

Narrator: Mean Jean always got her way until...

Student 1: One day a new girl came to school.

Student 2: Katie Sue. She was so tiny you could scare her with a

ALL: BOO!

Student 3: When the recess bell went

ALL: Ringity-ring!

Katie Sue: I ran zingity-zing!

Narrator: She swung first!

Student 1: She kicked first!

Student 2: She bounced first!

Student 3: The same girl who you could scare with a

ALL: BOO!

Narrator: Was too new to know about Mean Jean

ALL: The Recess Queen!

Mean Jean: Well, I bullied through the playground crowd

Student 1: And charged after Katie Sue!

Mean Jean: Say what?

ALL: Jean growled.

Mean Jean: Say who?

ALL: Jean howled.

Mean Jean: Say you!

ALL: And she figured she set the record straight with Katie Sue.

Katie Sue: Well you figured wrong!

Student 2: Katie Sue talked back!

Student 3: And super sassy, she said:

Katie Sue: How DID you get so bossy?

ALL: And she grabbed the ball and ran away!

Mean Jean: I thundered close behind!

Narrator: The Recess Queen was NOT amused!

Student 1: She raced and chased

Student 2: And in your faced Katie Sue.

Student 3: No one spoke.

Narrator: No one moved.

ALL: No one breathed.

Mean Jean: Then Katie Sue pulled a jump rope from her pack

Katie Sue: Hey Jeanie Beanie! Let's try this jump rope out!

Student 1: No one had ever

ALL: DARED

Student 2: To ask Mean Jean to play.

Student 3: Katie Sue skipped away and sang:

Katie Sue: I like ice cream, I like tea, I want Jean to jump with me!

Narrator: Jean just stared!

ALL: Like she was SCARED.

Student 1: Then someone yelled out:

ALL: Go, Jean, Go!

Student 2: And too surprised to even shout

Student 3: Jean jumped in and sang along.

Mean Jean: The rope went faster!

Katie Sue: And faster!

ALL: And faster!

Narrator: Till it caught in a disaster!

Mean Jean and Katie Sue: We just giggled!

ALL: And jumped again!

Student 1: Well, now when recess rolls around

Student 2: The playground is one great place!

Student 3: Jean doesn't push kids

Katie Sue: Or smoosh kids!

Mean Jean: Because I'm having too much fun

ALL: Playing with her FRIENDS!