

Title: Devising from pictures



1ST TEACHING PERIOD

1st Activity – Rules of IMPROVISATION

Time – 15 minutes

Type of activity – discussion, brainstorming, watching for relevant information

Class organisation – individual work, group work

Actions/Tasks – The students brainstorm ideas as what IMPROVISATION means and try to explain the word in their own words. Afterwards, they will watch a video explaining some rules they should follow in order to have a successful activity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StESLTnGyHM>

2nd Activity - Freeze Frame Game

Time – 20 minutes

Type of activity – improvisation game, watching for relevant information

Class organisation – class work, pair work

Actions/Tasks – The teacher will explain the game: In the Freeze Frame game (FF) two volunteers are needed. They have to imagine a scene about anything they want, but the scene must be easily understood by the rest of the group. They have to make large gestures and when the teacher says “Freeze!” they must stop and another volunteer has to replace one of them. The new team has to start from the previous position, but they have to imagine a completely new scene.

Before starting the game, the students will watch the video in the link below for clear exemplification:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EbCy08p4Ko>

3rd Activity - A picture is worth a thousand words!

Time - 15 minutes

Type of activity – brainstorming, group discussion, explore non-verbal communication

Class organisation – individual work, classwork

Actions/Tasks - The teacher sits on a chair somewhere where the students can see him/her and assumes the pose in the picture, with the hands folded in the lap and asks students to think about words to describe the image created (as a variation, the teacher can use a volunteer student and give him/her a note in which explains what position to take). The results of the brainstorm activity are written on the board, the teacher deals with any vocabulary issues that may arise.

The picture can be found following this link:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whistler%27s_Mother

2ND TEACHING PERIOD

1st Activity

Time – 15 minutes

Type of activity – brainstorming, searching for information,

Class organisation – individual work, class work

Actions/Tasks – The teacher asks the students to think about their grandparents or an old neighbour, an old person they know. What words can they use to describe them (if new

vocabulary needs to be introduced, the teacher can help them, for example: wise, calm, funny, talkative, helpful, knowledgeable, respected...)

The teacher introduces the picture and asks the students to analyse it, brainstorm ideas and vocabulary. The teacher can use a list of questions to help guide the students.

- Who can you see in the picture?
- What is she wearing?
- What is she doing?
- What do you think she is looking at?
- What do you think she is thinking about?
- What can you see in the room?
- What about the other senses we can employ: smell, sounds, touch? Anything that the picture may suggest to us?
- Why is she wearing black clothes?
- What does the painting make you think about? Find a word to describe it best.

2nd Activity - Let's paint a bigger picture

Time – 40 minutes

Type of activity – creative writing, improvisation, monologue, presentation and discussion

Class organisation – team work,

Actions/Tasks – The class is divided in 4 teams. Each team gets a copy of the picture and they have a moment to look at it and talk about it. Now each team gets a worksheet and its own task.

- **Team 1:** The students have to create a vocal/sound background for the picture. First they make a list of sounds that may be heard and then try to make those sounds so the other teams can guess them;
- **Team 2:** The students have to create a monologue, the old woman's thoughts;
- **Team 3:** The students have to imagine that they are the old woman's children or grandchildren and they have to write a few sentences (the text can be a letter, e-mail, diary page) about their mother/grandmother;
- **Team 4:** The students have to pretend to be the old woman's neighbours and say what they think about the old woman (the students can imagine the text as two neighbours gossiping on the phone or in front of the house).

Since the 3rd Teaching period involves the performance, the students may use any props they consider to be necessary, and they can bring to school. (suggestions: hat, scarf, cape or big coat, a handkerchief....)

3rd TEACHING PERIOD

1st Activity – Performance!

Time – 20 minutes

Type of activity – presentation, class discussion, self-evaluation

Class organisation – team work, class work

Actions/Tasks – Each team presents their work, when they finish, they give and receive feedback from the other teams. Team 1, for example, may decide to leave out some of the sounds they thought about initially (as students tend to add a lot of noise and sounds and realise silence is also very important sometimes).

Before they start their performance, the students have to re-create the MAIN CHARACTER, the old lady in the painting, using a chair and any props they think they could use: a hat, a coat, a scarf....While they are performing, the old lady in the portrait now represented by the chair is the silent spectator.

2nd Activity - Here comes the rain!

Time – 10 minutes

Type of activity – assigning tasks to each team, problem solving, collaborative work

Class organisation – team work

Actions/Tasks - In order to appreciate the importance of sound effects and silence, and the fact that sometimes you do not need a lot of noise to convey a lot of meaning to the scene, the students try to create the sounds of rain using their hands and bodies.

First, they should watch the video provided in the link below and the teacher can act as an orchestra conductor.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKDGCgXtETc>

3rd Activity - Give life and voice to the picture

Time – 15 minutes

Type of activity - speaking, debate

Class organisation – classwork, frontal activity

Actions/Tasks – The students perform again, this time, team 1, with the help of the other teams who are not performing, try to offer the rain sound background to the stories presented.

They now have a complete story from different angles and perspectives starting from just a picture.

4th Activity – 20 min

Now they have more than a picture, they have some sound, some thoughts, ideas, characters, a story – a play. They have talked about old people; the teacher can ask more questions to help them solve their homework:

Can you tell me what problems they may have?

Could you imagine what the happiest moment of this woman's life was?

As *homework*, they have to write a MONOLOGUE – a paragraph about the happiest moment of her life.