

Sample Elementary Theatre Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic

Imaginative Animal Play

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:

Communicating, collaborating, and encouraging growth using imagination to create characters.

Essential Questions:

- How can you use your body to communicate?
- How can you use your imagination to create a character?

Standard Alignment

(Standards pulled from Theatre Grade 2 though the lesson can be adjusted to be appropriate for grades 1-3)

CREATING

TA2.CR.1 Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.

- a. Use imagination to create characters.

TA2.CR.2 Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.

- a. Explore the dramatic writing process.
- b. Collaborate to generate story ideas.
- c. Develop dialogue based on stories (e.g. personal, imaginary, real).
- d. Develop character and setting through action and dialogue.

PERFORMING

TA2.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments.

- a. Use imagination and vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate a character's thoughts, emotions, and actions.
- b. Use imagination and physical choices to communicate a character's thoughts and emotions

CONNECTING

TA2.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content.

- a. Connect theatre experiences to life experiences and other content areas.

Instructional Design

***This lesson has a flexible timeline but can be accomplished in 1-2 days.**

This lesson is intended to reach students in a virtual setting, whether plugged or unplugged. See the bottom of the lesson for a list of unplugged supplies. This lesson can be scaled up or down for grades 1-3.

FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION:

Theatre Games, Animals and Animal Diets

CONCEPTS:

Animals

Animal diets

Imaginative play

Body Communication

LINKS:

[Digital Name Game Demonstration Video](#)

[Animal Fables Link](#)

[Teacher Reading the Text and Engaging Students in Imaginative Play](#)

[Kid Zone: Animal Classes](#)

[PBS Learning Media: What do Animals Eat?](#)

Part 1:

Introduce the Animal Name Game

Basic Game

Students stand in a circle or use a gallery view on the synchronous digital platform. The first participant begins by introducing themselves by stating their name and an animal that begins with the first letter of his first name. The first student named “Pat” would state “I’m Pat the Penguin” The entire group says “Hello” to “x” the “x animal”. and assigns a simple movement which will signify the animal. For example, an elephant might make a trunk movement with the arm. A rabbit might make bunny ears over the head. The penguin might waddle three steps forward. Whatever the animal is the movement should be kept simple. This process is continued until all students have a separate animal. Then the game begins. The leader says their name and makes their symbol first, and then the symbol of another animal such as the rabbit. The rabbit then makes their own symbol, and then the symbol of another animal. In the short version of this game, the process continues long enough for every student to get to participate in the game. Variations of the game can be found at the end of the lesson.

Sample Video:

[Digital Name Game Demonstration Video](#)

Unplugged Option: Using the Name Game and Variation instructions have the student play a version of the game with a family member. Let the student draw their animal movement.

Part 2:

Animal Story and activity:

In a live or recorded session read a children’s book involving animal characters, on a synchronous digital platform such as Google Meet ([How it Works: Google Meet](#)), or create an asynchronous video of your own.

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Teachers are encouraged to select age-appropriate children’s literature from their collection. It is also possible to use copyright free stories such as the ones listed in the animal fables located in the TRL:

[Animal Fables Link](#)

After the story, engage the students in some imaginative play related to the book.

Sample Video:

[Teacher Reading the Text and Engaging Students in Imaginative Play](#)

Unplugged Option: Have a parent read to book to the student or select an animal book for the student to read on their own.

Part 3: Student Assignment

Animal Restaurant

Plan Your Character

Select a character from the story. How does the character talk? How does the character move? What do they want to do? Draw a picture of your character.

If your character had a restaurant for animals, what would you serve? Research what types of food you would need to feed at least two different types of animals in each category: bird, mammal, reptile, and amphibian. Create a menu for your character’s restaurant. Provide each type of food for each animal diet you researched.

Animal Research:

[Kid Zone: Animal Classes](#)

[PBS Learning Media: What do Animals Eat?](#)

Act it out!

Welcome others to your restaurant. Explain your menu. Where possible engage others in your imagination. Be sure to use your body and voice to take on the new character.

The students can present their character and menu on the digital synchronous platform.

The student can also film their menu presentation with their new character and submit the video to the teacher to do the task asynchronously.

Evidence of Student Success

Diagnostic: Animal Name Game

Formative: Teacher observation, Role-Playing Group Story Based Game

Summative: Character Restaurant Presentation

Distance Learning Supports

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Ideas for Differentiation:

Our goal is for all students to be actively engaged using the body, the voice, speaking, reflecting, and writing. Below are changes to the lesson to help achieve that goal for students who need additional support. or increased rigor. Note: Be careful using these lessons for all students.

- Consider allowing students to record their thoughts in a variety of ways: using the talk to text/dictate feature, making an audio recording of their responses, drawing pictures, circling and/or labeling on their diagram or PowerPoint printouts, etc.
- Students needing additional support can limit the number of animal diets to research.
- For low-tech and unplugged adaptation students can work one-on-one with teachers on the phone during the planning stages and the presentation.
- Students working at an accelerated pace can write a full script for their presentation or even engage in a full beginning, middle, and end scene including others in imaginative play. Students can act out the entirety of one of the fables attached to the lesson.

Unplugged Supplies: Lesson checklist, animal story, assignment handout, copy of assignment rubric.

Engaging Families

Materials included supporting unplugged learners: Lesson checklist, animal game instructions, and variations, animal story, assignment handout, copy of assignment rubric.

Optional materials to support learning:

Animal Research:

[Kid Zone: Animal Classes](#)

[PBS Learning Media: What do Animals Eat?](#)

Alternative PBS Learning Lesson:

[PBS Learning Media: Pretend Play Lesson Plan | PINKALICIOUS & PETERRIFIC®](#)

Imaginative Play:

[PBS Kids: Learning Through Dramatic Play](#)



Lesson Checklist

Part 1:

- 1. Play the animal name game.

Part 2:

- 2. Read, watch, or listen to the animal story.
- 3. Engage in class animal activity after the story.

Part 3:

- 4. Choose a character from the story.
- 5. Answer the character questions about your character.
- 6. Research your animal diets
- 7. Create a menu including the foods found in your animal diet research
- 8. In character, welcome patrons to your restaurant and present your menu.



Animal Name Games and Variations:

1. **Name animal game**

Grades

- K and Up

Skills and Purpose:

- Good for memory and movement
- This game is more effective for a shy group or a group that needs to be eased into play

Basic Game

Students stand in a circle. The first student begins by introducing himself by stating his name and an animal that begins with the first letter of his first name. So the first student named “Pat” would state “I’m Pat the Penguin” The entire group says “Hello” to “x” the “x animal”. The second student repeats the first student's name and animal and then adds his own to the list. The “hello” is extended to the new member and the third student jumps in repeating the first two, and then adding his own and so on down the line. At the end of the game, the first student must go through the list alone.

Variations:

- The animals can be replaced with vegetables or other open categories. If this game needs to be played several times it is a good idea to switch up the nouns so that the names are remembered more than the animals.
- Time limits can be added to this game to make it more competitive.
- The individual repetition can be replaced by group repetition if needed.

King Frog Variations:

1. **King frog**

Grades

- 6-12

Skills or purpose

- good warm-up
- encourages focus, movement, tactics, quick choices
- This game requires some setup time and a great deal of memory.

Basic Game

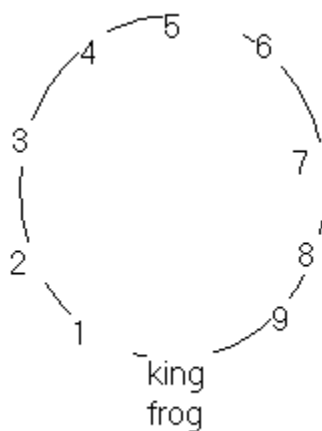
Students stand in a circle. One student is the king's frog. His symbol is a clap similar to the one used in “zip zap zop.” If this is unfamiliar any clap will do. The student to the left of king frog picks an animal and assigns a simple movement that will signify the animal. For example, an elephant might make a trunk movement with the arm. A rabbit might make bunny ears over the head. The penguin might waddle three steps forward. Whatever the animal is the movement should be kept simple. This process is continued until all students have a separate animal. Then the game begins without talking. King Frog makes his/her symbol first, and then the symbol of another animal such as the rabbit. The rabbit then makes his/her own symbol,



and then the symbol of another animal. This continues at increasing speed until a student makes a mistake by forgetting the order of communication, breaking the rhythm, or forgetting his or her animal. In the short version of this game that student's animal is eliminated. King frog starts the game again and this continues until all but two are left.

Variations

- The full version of the game does not have an elimination element. If a student makes a mistake, they must relinquish their animal and go to the position in the circle that is to the right of king frog.
 - The student then takes on the animal of that position and all the students affected by this change move down a slot and take on the appropriate animal.



- This diagram replaces the animals with numbers. If the student in the number five position made a mistake, then he or she is five would go to nine and the students from 6-9 would move into new slots.
- The student formerly in 9 would become 8, 8 to 7, 7 to 6, and 6 to 5.

- If the animals were numbers starting from the left to the right then

The object of this version is to become king frog, by working one's way up the chain to the coveted position to the left of king frog and then by getting King frog to make a mistake.

Alternate Story Texts:

COURSE: Advanced Drama I	Unit: 1	Ten-Minute Plays
Fables		

The Ant and the Grasshopper

In a field one summer's day, a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper,
"instead of toiling and moiling in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why to bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew:

It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.

The Bear and the Two Travelers

TWO MEN were traveling together when a Bear suddenly met them on their path. One of them climbed up quickly into a tree and concealed himself in the branches. The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the Bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could. The Bear soon left him, for it is said he will not touch a dead body. When he was quite gone, the other Traveler descended from the tree and jocularly inquired of his friend what it was the Bear had whispered in his ear. "He gave me this advice," his companion replied. "Never travel with a friend who deserts you at the approach of danger."

Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends.



The Dove and the Ant

An Ant, going to a river to drink, fell in, and was carried along in the stream. A Dove pitied her condition, and threw into the river a small bough, by means of which the Ant gained the shore. The Ant afterward, seeing a man with a fowling-piece aiming at the Dove, stung him in the foot sharply, and made him miss his aim, and so saved the Dove's life.

"Little friends may prove great friends."

The Fox and the Grapes

One hot summer's day a Fox was strolling through an orchard till he came to a bunch of Grapes just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a lofty branch. "Just the thing to quench my thirst," quoth he. Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last, had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: "I am sure they are sour."

It is easy to despise what you cannot get.

The Jay and the Peacock

A Jay venturing into a yard where Peacocks used to walk, found there a number of feathers which had fallen from the Peacocks when they were molting. He tied them all to his tail and strutted down towards the Peacocks. When he came near them they soon discovered the cheat, and striding up to him pecked at him and plucked away his borrowed plumes. So the Jay could do no better then go back to the other Jays, who had watched his behaviour from a distance; but they were equally annoyed with him, and told him:

"It is not only fine feathers that make fine birds."

The Wolf and the Kid

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A Kid was perched up on the top of a house, and looking down saw a Wolf passing under him. Immediately he began to revile and attack his enemy. "Murderer and thief," he cried, "what do you here near honest folks' houses? How dare you make an appearance where your vile deeds are known?"

"Curse away, my young friend," said the Wolf.

"It is easy to be brave from a safe distance."

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

A Wolf found great difficulty in getting at the sheep owing to the vigilance of the shepherd and his dogs. But one day it found the skin of a sheep that had been flayed and thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep. The Lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the Wolf was wearing, began to follow the Wolf in the Sheep's clothing; so, leading the Lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal off her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.

Appearances are deceptive.

The Frogs Asking for a King

The frogs, grieved at having no established Ruler, sent ambassadors to Jupiter entreating for a King. Perceiving their simplicity, he cast down a huge log into the lake. The Frogs were terrified at the splash occasioned by its fall and hid themselves in the depths of the pool. But as soon as they realized that the huge log was motionless, they swam again to the top of the water, dismissed their fears, climbed up, and began squatting on it in contempt. After some time they began to think themselves ill-treated in the appointment of so inert a Ruler, and sent a second deputation to Jupiter to pray that he would set over them another sovereign. He then gave them an Eel to govern them. When the Frogs discovered his easy good nature, they sent yet a third time to Jupiter to beg him to choose for them still another King. Jupiter, displeased with all their complaints, sent a Heron, who preyed upon the Frogs day by day till there were none left to croak upon the lake.

The Hare and the Tortoise

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. "I have never yet been beaten," said he, "when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me."

The Tortoise said quietly, "I accept your challenge."

"That is a good joke," said the Hare; "I could dance round you all the way."

"Keep your boasting till you've beaten," answered the Tortoise. "Shall we race?"

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So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race. Then said the Tortoise:

"Slow and steady wins the race."

The Eagle and the Fox

AN EAGLE and a Fox formed an intimate friendship and decided to live near each other. The Eagle built her nest in the branches of a tall tree, while the Fox crept into the underwood and there produced her young. Not long after they had agreed upon this plan, the Eagle, being in want of provision for her young ones, swooped down while the Fox was out, seized upon one of the little cubs, and feasted herself and her brood. The Fox on her return, discovered what had happened, but was less grieved for the death of her young than for her inability to avenge them. A just retribution, however, quickly fell upon the Eagle. While hovering near an altar, on which some villagers were sacrificing a goat, she suddenly seized a piece of the flesh, and carried it, along with a burning cinder, to her nest. A strong breeze soon fanned the spark into a flame, and the eaglets, as yet unfledged and helpless, were roasted in their nest and dropped down dead at the bottom of the tree. There, in the sight of the Eagle, the Fox gobbled them up.

