WORD/PLAY CURRICULUM

Developed by Morgan Hicks, Director of Education and Program Development, TheatreSquared
and Erika Wilhite, Learning Programs Manager, TheatreSquared

The Word/Play curriculum was developed in Arkansas classrooms with the support of the Arkansas Arts Council and the Brown Chair of English Literacy at the University of Arkansas.

The Word/Play curriculum is designed to lead students through a month-long playwriting unit, leading to enhanced literacy through the guided application of basic concepts of dramatic literature. The curriculum will include introductory vocabulary as well as writing prompts. The unit will culminate in the creation of short plays that can be read out loud for an invited audience. The public component is important, as it adds a deadline and stakes to the creation process. It also serves as a meaningful validation of the work.

Options for public component:

- Have students read their own plays out loud
- Assign students to read the plays created by their classmates
- Invite professional actors to read the plays
- Invite students from the drama class to read (or perform) the plays created by the WordPlay playwrights.

DAY ONE: PLOT STRUCTURE

Objective: To learn the Aristotelian climactic plot structure for storytelling by plotting a classic fairytale and by creating our own stories using the structure.

Vocabulary: Plot, Story, Stasis, Inciting Incident, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action (Denoument), Conflict, Author's Intent

Learning Standards:

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3e
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.5	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10

In this exercise, the students learn the structure of a climactic plot. Mastery of the visual schematic is very important.   Draw the structure on board.
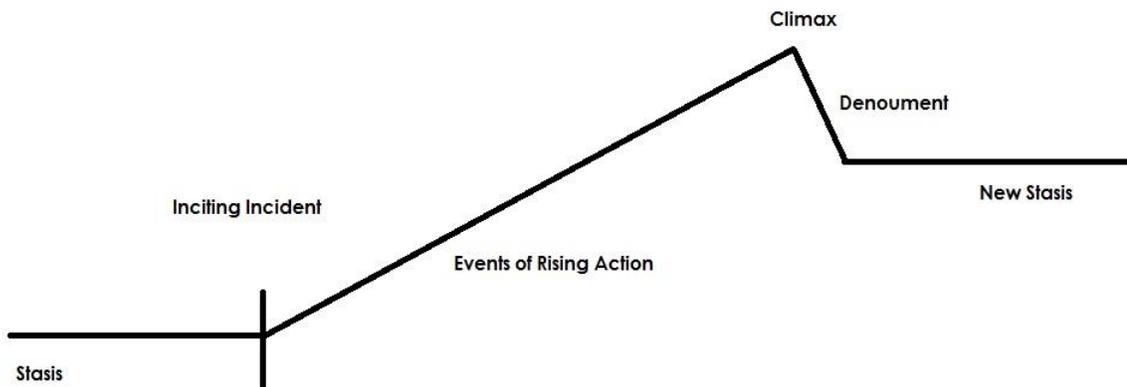
Discuss the definitions of stasis, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, new stasis.

Emphasize that the inciting incident is the event that occurs to make today different from a normal day. This is the introduction of conflict. Without conflict we can have no drama.

Chart a "day in the life" of a character. Let's look at "a day in the life" of Erika.   What is her stasis? What does her morning usually look like? When does she wake up? What does she eat for breakfast? Now…what is the inciting incident? What will make today different from every other normal day? Brainstorm with the class a fun and interesting adventure for Erika to go on.

Plot the events on the chart as you go.

Discuss how the new stasis could very likely become the starting point for a whole new climactic plot.

Discuss the difference of plot and story.

STORY: All of the events and facts that create the totality of the world where our "plot" will exist. The "story" is a big picture. The "story" could include many different points of view or many different pieces of conflicting information.

PLOT: The specific events that the author selects to communicate. Each author chooses to include or exclude specific events in order to forward a specific agenda, therefore the plot events can illuminate "author's intent".

Now, as a group, chart the plot of a familiar book or movie…we often use "Cinderella" as our example. What is included? What is omitted? What do those choices tell us about the author's intent?

DAY TWO: AUTHOR'S INTENT

Objective: To understand author's intent, and to examine how structure and choice can illuminate the theme or message of a piece of writing.

Vocabulary: Plot, Conflict, Author's Intent, Antagonist, Protagonist, Point of View

Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3e
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.5	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10

What is the moral of Cinderella? Why did the author choose these parts of the plot to show us? For example, is it a story about an obsession of shoes? Love conquers all? Keep your enemies close? If the author had a different agenda, how would that affect the events that they would select to include in the plotline?

IN CLASS GROUP WRITING PROMPT:

In small groups (no more than 3 or 4) work together to imagine a different climactic plot line that might exist within the story of Cinderella.

How would the story be different if you changed the protagonist? Maybe it's the story of the prince or the wicked stepmother. Maybe this plotline exist before or after the plot of the traditional Cinderella we know.

Describe the stasis. Plot the inciting incident, at least 3 events in a rising action, a climax, falling action, and then describe the new stasis.

How did the events that were selected to be included in this plotline change the audience's perception?

Did the moral of the story change?

Discuss examples of how the events that were selected could give insight into the author's intent.

DAY THREE: FORMULA WRITING

Objective: To explore the use of metaphor in creative writing. Metaphor is a powerful tool in communicating a concept without saying exactly what you mean. Interesting plays often employ metaphors that allow the audience to come to an understanding of meaning rather than being explicitly told what to think or feel.

Vocabulary: Metaphor, Protagonist, Antagonist, Objective, Obstacle

Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5a
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-12.5b
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.4	

EXERCISE #1: FORMULA POEM

Lead the class in creating formula poems.

Have each student take out a piece of paper and make a list of the following parts of speech (they may need to refresher/examples…don't give too many examples, or they will be tempted to just use your words).

Verb

Noun

Verb

Adjective

Animal

Now have students fill the words into the poem in the exact order they were created.

Go _____ the _____ but don't _____,

Because You and I are _____ _____ together.

The poem probably doesn't make any sense. Encourage them not to try to retro-fit the words in any way. Let it be nonsensical.

Now have them title their poems "How to Fall in Love"

Talk about how poetry is often surprising and sometimes makes us think about the world in new ways.

Ask for volunteers to share their poems. Have the class work together to "analyze" the poem and parse it for meaning. What could these metaphors mean? Are they true? What do they say about the way we love? Define metaphor and discuss the different metaphors we use regularly in our life.

EXERCISE #2: IDENTIFYING METAPHOR

As a class, read the poem "A Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes and discuss the metaphors in the poem.

A Dream Deferred
by Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Draw from the students' personal experiences that relate to the specific metaphors in the poem. What is it like to have a dream deferred? This should be a good discussion where students will offer personal examples. What dreams do they have? What does it feel like when a dream has to wait? What does it feel like when you realize that a dream will never become reality?

IN CLASS WRITING PROMPT:

Have students imagine two characters. One character will be the protagonist. One character will be the antagonist. Write a short conversation between the characters about a dream that the protagonist needs to defer. The protagonist should have a clear need or desire (objective) and that the antagonist needs to represent an obstacle to achieving that goal.

_____

DAY FOUR: SUBTEXT

Objective: To explore inference and to practice reading between the lines. Often in drama, the greater meaning lies in what is implied rather than what is said. We have to look beyond the lines of dialogue and examine what the characters mean to say as well as what is communicated through their actions.

Vocabulary: Subtext, Implication, Inference

Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.5
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.9a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5a
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.9b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.3	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-12.5b

Introduce the play "A RAISIN IN THE SUN". This play was inspired by the Langston Hughes Poem "A Dream Deferred".

Explain the basic plot of the play: The Younger family lives in a small apartment in the south side of Chicago. They struggle with poverty and dream of a better life. When the grandfather of the family passes away, the grandmother will receive a $10,000 insurance check. She has decided to use this money as a down payment on a nice house in the suburbs. The family is packing up the apartment and plans to move into the home the next day when an unexpected visitor arrives.

The two instructors will read the selected scene from "Raisin in the Sun."

LINDNER
 How do you do?

WALTER
How do you do?

LINDNER
I'm looking for...

WALTER
Yes, who do you want, please?

LINDNER
Mrs. Lena Younger.

WALTER
That's my mother. My mother isn't here just now. Is it on business?

LINDNER
 Yes. Well, of a sort.

WALTER
Won't you have a seat? I'm...Mrs. Younger's son. I take care of most of her business matters and things.

LINDNER
My name is Mark Lindner...

WALTER
Walter Lee Younger.

LINDNER
How do you do?

WALTER
 Hi. What can we do for you?

LINDNER
I'm a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association.

WALTER
Rest your hat and bag on the floor. We're cluttered up from packing.

LINDNER
But as I was saying....I'm from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association...and we had it brought to our attention at the last meeting......that you people, or at least your mother...has bought a piece of residential property at 4...4930 Clybourne Street.

WALTER
That's right. Would you care for something to drink? A beer?

LINDNER
No, thank you, please.

WALTER
Some coffee?

LINDNER
Thank you, nothing at all. Now, I don't know how much you folks know about our organization.
It's one of those community organizations set up to look after....you know, things like..block upkeep and special projects and... Then we also have what we call our New Neighbors Orientation Committee.

WALTER
Yes. And what do they do?

LINDNER

Well, they... Well, it's what you might call a sort of welcoming committee, I guess. I mean, they...
No, we... Well, I'm chairman of the committee. I go around and see the new people who move into the neighborhood and give them the lowdown on the way we do things in Clybourne Park. But then...
And then we have the category of what the association call...Special Community Problems.

WALTER
And what are some of those?

LINDNER
I'm sure that you people must be aware of some of the incidents...that have happened in various parts of the city when...colored people have moved into certain areas. Because we have what
I think is going to be... a unique type of organization in American community life. Not only do we deplore that kind of thing...but we're doing something about it. Now, we feel that...We feel that most of the trouble in this world...when you come right down to it......most of the trouble exists because
people don't sit down and talk.

WALTER
You can say that again, mister.

LINDNER
That we don't try hard enough in this world to understand the other fellow's problems, his point of view.

WALTER
Now that's the truth.

LINDNER
Well, you see, our community is made up of people who've worked hard as the dickens to build up that little community. Now, we're not rich or fancy people. I mean, we're just hard-working, honest people who don't really have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community we want to raise our children in. Well, now, I don't say that we're perfect. And there's a lot wrong in some of the things we want. But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in...in a certain kind of way. At the moment, the overwhelming majority of people out there feel...that people get along better...take more of a common interest in the life of the community ...when they share a common background.

WALTER
Now wait. Now wait.

LINDNER
I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply doesn't enter into it. It's a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing...rightly or wrongly, as I say that for the happiness of all concerned…that our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities.

WALTER
This is the Welcoming Committee. This is what you come all the way across town to tell us, huh?

LINDNER
We've been having a fine conversation. I hope you'll hear me all the way through.

WALTER
Come on.

LINDNER
Well, you see, in the face of all the things I've said, we're prepared to make your family
a very generous offer.

WALTER
Thirty pieces and not a coin less.

LINDNER
Now, our association is prepared, through the collective efforts...of our people...to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family.

WALTER
Lord have mercy. Ain't this the living gall!

LINDNER
All right.

WALTER
Through?

LINDNER
Now, the exact terms of the financial arrangement...

WALTER
I don't want no exact terms of no financial arrangements. You got anything else to say about how people...should talk these things over?

LINDNER
I guess you don't feel...

WALTER
Never mind. You get out of here!

LINDNER
I don't understand why you people are reacting this way! What do you think you'll gain by moving to a neighborhood where you aren't wanted...and where some elements...People get worked up when their way of life...and all they've worked for is threatened.

WALTER
Get out!

LINDNER
I'm sorry it went like this.

WALTER
Just leave.

LINDNER
You just can't force people to change their hearts, son.

What do we know from what is spoken? What do we know from what is unspoken? What can we assume from reading between the lines? Isolate moments in the script when the characters expressed their points of view without coming out and saying it plainly. For example, what do we know from the way that Lindner refuses to accept a beer or to sit down? Is this how language works in the real world? Have students share examples of times when they communicate without the actual intention being spoken. Discuss the idea of "action speaking louder than words". When they are writing their play, they will need to think about times when they forward ideas through action rather than always strictly through dialogue.

The play is racially charged. The conversation may naturally land on racism. Do they feel that racism is more dangerous when it is overt or when it is covert?

IN-CLASS WRITING PROMPT: Have students write a scene between two people who communicate their feelings and points of view without coming and saying what they really mean to illustrate that actions speak louder than words. Have the students use the dialogue formula. Writing within the formula will be challenging, but will help them create a natural speaking pattern.

6

2

4

8

2

4

10

6

2

18

4

6

_____

DAY FIVE: EMPATHY

Objective: To explore the ways in which theatre affords the opportunity to empathize with characters. The audience invests in the character's journey, living vicariously through their attempts to reach their objectives. The events in a plot chain need to follow in a logical cause and effect sequence, or the audience will lose the ability to feel empathy for the characters. If the events feel to "random" the audience will not invest in the outcome.

Vocabulary: Empathy, Given Circumstances, Ambiguity

Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.5

EXERCISE: HOW DID WE GET HERE?

As a group, listen to a storycorps story about forgiveness called "Beyond Belief" at
http://storycorps.org/listen/mary-johnson-and-oshea-israel/

Go back to the climactic plot structure.
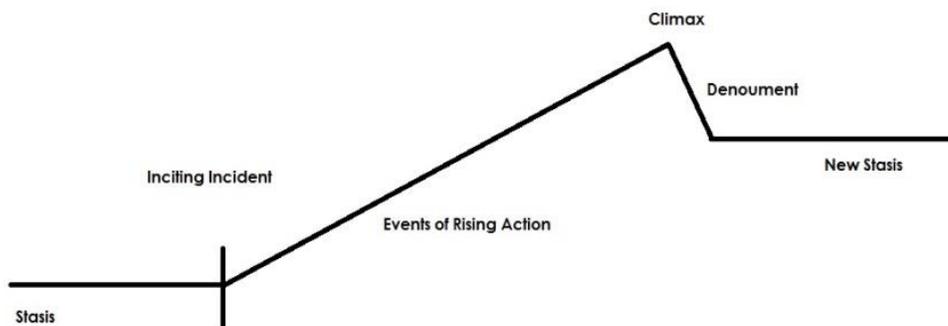
Discuss how in this audio clip we only get information about the new stasis. With only this information, discuss empathy. Do we feel sorry for anyone? Who do we relate to? Does the climax feel justified? Does the new stasis seem reasonable? Would it be easy to forgive someone who murdered your loved one?

Now as a class, go further back in the plotline. What events could have led to the climax that could make it possible to imagine the new stasis?   As a class, plot an imaginary scenario that could lead us to the climax. Create a stasis full of unique given circumstances and attempt to create a logical cause and effect chain of rising action. This will take a good level of collaboration/compromise to agree on events as a group. Usually there are drug deals and gangs involved.

Discuss the fact that sometimes the protagonist that we are following is not necessarily a "good" guy". In this case, the protagonist is the murderer. In drama, just like in life, the world is full of ambiguity. Usually empathy is found in the gray zone. Does knowing the set of circumstances make it easier to empathize?

IN-CLASS WRITING PROMPT:

Have the students write the scene in which the inciting incident occurs. Since this happens at the beginning of the play, be sure to include clues about given circumstances and stasis. What do we need to know about the protagonist when we meet him? How will you introduce the conflict?

Have them use an AB formula to write the scene

Character A: 1 line of dialogue

Character B: 2 lines of dialogue

A: 3 lines

B: 1 line

A: 1 line

B: 4 lines

A: 2 lines

B: 1 line

A: 2 lines

B: 2 lines

A: 1 line

B: 4 lines

A: 2 lines

B: 3 lines

After this strict line count, they can give the characters as many lines per exchange as they please.

Tableau Projects

Objective: to learn the technique of tableau in order to increase comprehension of situation, conflict, and character in a story.

Vocabulary: Tableau, Physicalization, Focus, Point of View

Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.5
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.3	

EXERCISE #1: INTRO TO TABLEAU

A tableau is a frozen picture that tells a story, like an illustration in a book. Tableaus are created in small groups with limited time constraints—1 minute challenges and 4 minute challenges. The simpler ideas should be created in 1 minute. The more complicated ideas that require deeper discussion should be given 4 minutes. Watch the clock and give them reminders every thirty seconds. Count down from 5 at the end. The entire picture should be frozen by "One."

Before "writing" with tableau, *practice* the technique. Give them one- minute challenges to create (in this order): a bicycle, a roller coaster, a birthday party. Discuss during each different prompt the importance of creating levels (low, medium, high) in order to make compelling artistic pictures. Also no props, scenery, set pieces (chairs), or costumes. Do NOT sit on each other. Do not put your body in a position that will become uncomfortable to hold for five or more minutes.

IMPORTANT: Each time they create tableau, regardless of the assignment, the small collaborative groups must go through these questions before creating the tableau within the time constraint.

Advise the groups and remind them each time of the 3 questions each group should follow when making a tableau.

1. What are making? (if it's a birthday party, whose? A child's, an adult's, a cat's?)
2. What parts do we need? (based on what kind of birthday party)
3. What part do I play? (NO DIRECTORS! Everyone should make an offering on what they can play)

EXERCISE 2: SHOW ME THE STORY

Objective: to assess a comprehension of literature—plot, situation, conflict, character, theme, and more—by having the students demonstrate through tableau.

Assign small groups. Read aloud to the class several *short* passages from literature the class is studying (familiar or new). The small groups create a tableau after hearing each passage. Allow no more than 4 minutes. As they work, walk around and eavesdrop, listening for the discussion of the 3 questions. Resist the temptation to jump in and correct or advise. Your interruption will cut into their time. Give them the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Save your critiques and instruction for after a tableau is finished. If a group "fails", ask them why they didn't meet the challenge. If they felt they didn't have enough time, remind them if they followed the 3 questions in the correct order, they should have had plenty of time.

EXERCISE THREE: FILL IN THE BLANKS

Objective: To assess student's comprehension of dramatic plot structure by creating an original plot together in a large group, and "filling in the blanks" in four-minute tableau challenges.

Using a visual prompt (photograph, painting, etc) that includes a person, chart a plot about that character using the dramatic plot line. Work as a large group with the teacher making the chart based on group decisions. Take time at the beginning of the process to create a well- developed stasis that includes a strong background story. All ideas should be inspired by the information given in the image. As events are created in the rising action, make sure they relate to the character development created in the stasis. Are the choices "character driven?' Create as a group all the events leading up to the climax. Do not chart the climax together. Break into small groups (no more than 5) and give them four minutes to create a tableau that "writes" the climax of the play. Follow the activity with a discussion of why each group chose the climax they did.

Variations: In small groups, finish the play by "writing" a new stasis. Discuss afterward the reasons they chose the situations.

DAY SEVEN: ACTION

Objective: To understand the importance of "action" in a play.

Vocabulary: Action, Objective, Tactic, Strategy

Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.9b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.5

Everyone wants something and most people use tactics to get what we want. In this exercise, the students will empower their characters with tactics and "actions". In dramatic terms, action does not only refer to physical movement on stage, but emotional and psychological tactics.

EXERCISE #1: Strategy in Action

Discuss a few of the many psychological actions: *to shame, to guilt-trip (how are these two different?), to bully, to seduce, to tease, to encourage, to accuse, to flatter*. Have a group discussion on tactics your students might use to get what they want in example situations: from a teacher who might flunk them, their parents who have grounded them, a friend who is withholding a secret, etc. Point out that we use modes of manipulation every day.

Have student volunteers (stronger readers) or instructors read the following scene out loud:

HALL PASS

Characters:
Henry (15) The Hall Monitor. Takes his work very seriously.
Brady (16) More laid back in general, but needs to get to class to avoid punishment for being tardy.

> HENRY stands at attention center stage. He's wearing a sash over his shirt. He is the hall monitor. BRADY enters and approaches HENRY with confidence.

BRADY: (with a wave) What's up, Dude?

HENRY: Hello, Brady.

BRADY: (trying to pass by) What's up?

HENRY: (blocking) Sorry.

BRADY: What?

HENRY: You know.

BRADY: Really? You're really pulling this? With me?

HENRY: Hall pass, please.

BRADY: Dude.

HENRY: Hall pass.

BRADY: Dude.

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: Dude.

HENRY: Hall pass.

BRADY: Me?

HENRY: Everybody.

BRADY: Dude.

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: I'm gonna be late.

HENRY: Hall pass.

BRADY: I got it.

HENRY: Show it.

BRADY: It's here somewhere.

HENRY: Let me see it.

BRADY: Ok. Ok.

HENRY: Hall pass.

BRADY: I just had it. Must have dropped it or something.

HENRY: Shame.

BRADY: What? You don't believe me?

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: Come on. Are you serious? You know me.

HENRY: I don't know you.

BRADY: What?

HENRY: I don't know you.

BRADY: I'm Brady.

HENRY: You say you are. How can I be certain.

BRADY: Are you for real right now?

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: You just called me Brady.

HENRY: Did I?

BRADY: You just said, "Hello, Brady."

HENRY: That's very interesting.

BRADY: You're pushing this too far.

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: I've got to get to class. I'm going to be late.

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: If I'm late again, they won't let me play in the game on Friday.

HENRY: You'll have to go back to the office for a hall pass.

BRADY: You're going to make me go all the way back down there?

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: I can't do that.

HENRY: Just turn around and use your feet.

BRADY: Dude.

HENRY: Sorry.

BRADY: Don't make me go back there. Come on. For old times' sake?

HENRY: Whose old time?

BRADY: Ours.

HENRY: I don't know you.

BRADY: I'm Brady.

HENRY: So you say.

BRADY: I'm going to be late. I'm going to fail!

HENRY: Sounds like a real problem.

BRADY: If I fail and can't play the game on Friday, it's gonna be your problem.

HENRY: Don't threaten me.

BRADY: Everyone will be mad at you if I get in trouble.

HENRY: Really? Huh.

BRADY: Everyone will hate you.

HENRY: Everyone will? That sounds like a lot of hate.

BRADY: It will be. I'm loved. I'm a loved person around here.

HENRY: That sounds nice.

BRADY: And they will come after you if I get in trouble.

HENRY: Everyone will?

BRADY: They'll be so mad. I won't be able to stop them.

HENRY: I'm trembling.

BRADY: Why are you doing this? I mean….Who stood up for you in 2nd grade when Joe What-his-name…

HENRY: Johan Van Marten.

BRADY: Yeah. Johan. When he shoved you down and stomped on your glasses and everyone was afraid except me. I stood up for you.

HENRY: Really?

BRADY: That counts for something. You owe me.

HENRY: Really?

BRADY: That counts for something. You owe me.

HENRY: I don't think so.

BRADY: I'm really late now, dude.

HENRY: Poor time management skills can be a problem in life.

BRADY: I thought we were friends.

HENRY: We're not.

BRADY: Sure we are. We were.

HENRY: I don't know you.

BRADY: I know you. (getting frustrated) You know me! Are you saying that we didn't live on the same street? That our parents didn't know each other? Are you saying that my sister wasn't friends with your sister?

HENRY: Maybe. That was all true of Brady. But Brady and I used to talk all the time after school. We used to ride our bikes around the block. We used to watch cartoons and play video games.

BRADY: Well. Yeah. But I've been really busy with football after school. We still play video games and stuff some times.

HENRY: No. We don't.

BRADY: Sometimes.

HENRY: Not in the last 3 years. Not once in the last 3 years.

BRADY: Has it been that long?

HENRY: Not that I care or anything. I mean, it really doesn't matter to me or anything.

BRADY: Yeah. Obviously.

HENRY: You're not Brady. I knew Brady. He knew my name at school when other people were around. You haven't even waved at me in the hallway since 6th grade.

BRADY: I'm not ignoring you on purpose. We just run in different crews now, you know?

HENRY: Yeah. I do.

BRADY: It's not like I'm ashamed to know you or anything.

HENRY: That's kind of what it seems like.

BRADY: Ok. I get it. You're clearly ticked off.

HENRY: Then you think you can just come up to me and expect me to do you some favor. Get it trouble for looking

the other way when you're breaking the rules. I don't owe you.

BRADY: Ok. I guess not.

HENRY: The world doesn't owe you anything. Even if you did stand up for me in 2nd grade. And…it was the other way around.

BRADY: What was?

HENRY: I stood up for you. Johan Van Marten pushed you down in 2nd grade. I was the one that stood up for you. Then you changed the story around when we got home because you didn't want your sister to make fun of you. I went along with it because I didn't want you to be embarrassed.

BRADY: I don't remember that.

HENRY: It was a pretty long time ago.

BRADY: Are you sure?

HENRY: I didn't even wear glasses in 2nd grade. You wore glasses.

BRADY: Yeah. I kind of remember it now.

HENRY: Yeah. Well.

BRADY: Look. I'm sorry I've been acting like a tool. You're right to be pissed. I get it.

HENRY: It's whatever.

BRADY: Dude. I'm trying to apologize.

HENRY: You're late. You better get to class.

BRADY: Don't I need to go back to the office for the hall pass?

HENRY: Just go on to class before I change my mind.

BRADY: You wanna come over after school to play some X-Box?

HENRY: I'll see what I have on my schedule.

BRADY: Cool.

HENRY: Cool.

END OF PLAY

Lead the class in a group discussion about how the two characters approach their objectives. What tactics do they employ? Are their strategies effective? How do the physical objects represent what the characters need and/or want from one another?

Chart the scene on the climactic plot chart.
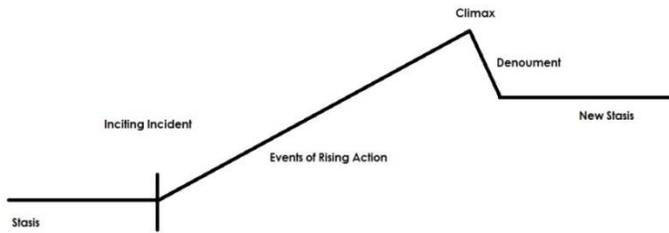
EXERCISE #2: WRITING PROMPT

Write a short AB Formula scene in which two characters want the same object. Employ tactics for each character to use in order to gain the object.

Character A: 1 line of dialogue

Character B: 2 lines

A: 3 lines

B: 1 line

A: 1 line

B: 4 lines

A: 2 lines

B: 1 line

After this strict line count, they can give the characters as many lines per exchange as they please.

EXERCISE #3: WRITING PROMPT

Write a short AB Formula scene in which one character needs something abstract from the other character (remind them the difference between concrete and abstract): trust, love, approval, loyalty, forgiveness, etc.

DAY EIGHT through END OF UNIT: PLAYWRITING

OBJECTIVE: Students will write their own short plays.

Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.4   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5a
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.5   CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-12.5b

Assess whether students are now able to begin working on their own short (5-10 page) plays. They may be ready to free write, or they may need a prompt. Prompts could include poems, photos or selections of music…anything to inspire their creativity. Encourage them to chart the events that they want to include before they begin working on dialogue.

Encourage them to limit numbers of characters to between two and four. Encourage them to limit locations to 2. Encourage them to limit the amount of time that they try to cover. It would be best if they could write 5-10 minutes of real time, but many will resist this limitation.

Several work sessions will need to be devoted to coaching them through the writing and revising process.

Have students work with partners to read their plays and give each other feedback, before they move on to the performance component that you choose.

Extra Prompts (because you might have extra time?)

Personal Journal

A great way to start a class is to begin after the bell with a writing prompt. Using an image the whole class can see, assign a free association five minute writing session. Advise the class to write in silence, without trying to write creatively. Encourage them to let the image inspire them in any way. Maybe it triggers a personal memory that connects them to another memory, etc. This is a personal journal that they do not need to turn in, but they should keep it for later sessions. The journal is to be used as a source of inspiration, a storage space for writing ideas, but also as a tool to clear their minds, much like a meditation.

Who Am I?

Share an image of a person (people) with the class. Give them 10 minutes to create a character biography based on the information provided in the image—clothing, facial expression, setting, spatial arrangement of bodies, etc. After making note of the details provided in the picture, advise them to create an imaginative character biography including back- story and current stasis.

This exercise can develop into a more involved writing exercise by following it with a dramatic plotline chart. Create a plot on the chart for this character after establishing who they are their current stasis.

APPENDIX

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 9-12
Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).
- (RL.9-10.8 not applicable to literature)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.10
  By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
  By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
  By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
  By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 9-12
Text Types and Purposes

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1a Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1b Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1c Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1d Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1e Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2a Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2b Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2c Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2d Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2f Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3c Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3d Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 9–10 here.)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.9a Apply *grades 9–10 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]").
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.9b Apply *grades 9–10 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning").

Range of Writing

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9–10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4b Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy*).
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4c Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4d Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5a Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
    - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5b Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.