

What is my body saying?

Essential Question:
How do I communicate character through movement?

We can show character in the way we move & interact with others and with our surroundings.

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Division No. 202



Character can be indicated through status, power and archetypes.

Mask helps us rely on the body to express character.

Focus, conflict and tension are used to show relationships between characters in a scene .

This unit uses mask as a way to build confidence in students and to facilitate character development through scene work and improvisation.

* Students can create their own character masks or Living Sky School Division teachers can borrow the set of 16 Character Masks from the board office.

Grade 8
ARTS EDUCATION

Strand
Drama

Outcomes
CP8.4
CP 8.5
CR 8.3



Living Sky School Division no. 202

I. Curriculum

Outcome: Creative/Productive

CP8.4 Demonstrate how dramatic characters interact in relationships within the drama and/or collective creation.

- Sustain **belief** in own roles and in the roles assumed by others for extended periods of time.
- Demonstrate **confidence and curiosity** when assuming different kinds of roles in drama work.
- Describe how **focus, tension, and contrast** function within the drama.
- Reflect on sources and functions of **tension expressed in relationships** among roles or characters portrayed.
- Examine how **contrasts among characters** function within the drama.

CP 8.5 Investigate how theatrical elements (e.g., story, character, design, space) are combined to achieve dramatic purpose.

- Identify how **theatrical elements** (e.g., story, role or character, technical design) can be manipulated to achieve a creative **purpose** and consider how such elements relate to own drama work.
- Analyze how each character's **actions** and the consequences of those actions **affect** the progression of the drama.
- Consider and analyze how set, costumes, lighting, and sound/music design can be manipulated to **achieve different effects** in own work.
- Demonstrate **imagination** when creating imaginary places and situations in own drama work.
- Analyze the use of movement, and the use of space and time in own work.

Outcome: Critical Responsive

CR8.3 Investigate and identify how arts expressions can reflect diverse worldviews.

- Examine, discuss, and participate in cultural/historical studies from diverse cultural perspectives
- Describe how diverse worldviews may be represented in the arts.

II. Overview

Students will Know:

- Character can be identified from a “visual reading” of body language.
- Interaction between characters is impacted by power and status .
- Relationship between characters is established in scenes and can change over time.
- Drama requires conflict.
- Contrast among characters builds audience interest.
- Archetypes are present through history to contemporary drama.
- Mask affects the quality of movement as shown through focus, tension and contrast.

Students will Do:

- Embody all Archetypes through improvisational exercises, showing the change in posture and centre of gravity.
- Apply the archetype to a scene with other characters, to show focus, contrast, and tension within relationships.
- Explore ways to move with a character mask, responding to music and other prompts for walking, greeting and sitting.
- Examine tableaux and clarity of message given through focus and tension in the image.
- Plan, rehearse and share a short silent scene, in mask, to show relationship, contrast and tension.

Questions for Deeper Understanding

Why does it feel different to move while wearing a mask?

How is this different from moving without mask? Does this affect confidence?

Why do actors call their body their “instrument”?

III. Assessment Plan

Formative

Assessment Evidence	Assessment Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student demonstrations of examples of body language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss – prior knowledge re: masks and movement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observations of role play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character archetypes shown through role play.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations and feedback on the role plays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the language of drama, specific criteria determined by the group.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assess the group process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a scene • Work with the group, collaborate and cooperate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal feedback, using specific language, given peer to peer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students to identify contrast, focus and tension within the exercises and tableaux. • Revise tableaux and share again

Summative

Assessment Evidence	Assessment Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Log (or journal) of exercises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the exercises in a Learning Log and reflect on challenges and surprises experienced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written plan of the scene. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and prepare the scene.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubric • Performance of scenes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-construct criteria for the silent scenes. • Use drama language purposefully

Language of Drama

As students practice using the language of drama when they reflect and comment on one another's work, the understanding of concepts deepen. Language to use:

- Conflict, tension, focus and symbol (elements of drama)
- Levels (high, medium, low)
- Stage pictures (how it looks to the audience)
- Blocking (where you move on stage & in relation to others)
- Status (importance and power of the character, impacts relationships)



Grade 8 students demonstrate tableaux and Character Archetypes:

(left to right)

Innocent, Fool, Fool, Trickster, Hero, Hero

IV. Learning Plan

Lesson One: Communication through Mask

Time Frame: approximately 2 hours

This unit incorporates Character Masks, available as a set to be borrowed from Living Sky School Division to LSKY teachers. Students can also create their own masks. There are many styles and mediums you can use to create masks to meet the Visual Arts outcomes.

- **Student Discussion:** “What do you know about body language? How much can we read into the way people stand, sit or move? How much can we determine about relationships between people by what we see?”
- **Silent Messages:** In pairs or groups of three – ask students to decide on something they want to show through body language (for example: one is disgusted with the other who wants to be friends; or a group are amazed by what they see; or one is shy and the other is encouraging). Take turns showing the class the body language, without WORDS, and ask the class to try to identify what they were trying to show.
- **Feedback:** use language of drama to provide feedback and suggestions for clarity – this will lead to the gradual development of co-constructed criteria for movement.
- **Introduce Mask Basics:**
 - ❖ Maintain the illusion – always take off/put on the mask with your back to audience.
 - ❖ Believability – don’t touch or adjust, don’t make noises (full face).
 - ❖ “Clock” the audience at entrance – look at them, pause a moment to get the focus, then move.
 - ❖ Awareness of body, clarity of movement, face up & front as much as possible.
 - ❖ Difficult to see and breathe – take your time, remove when you need to have a break, rehearse it with the mask.
 - ❖ Each mask represents a character - you “embody” the character through movement, posture, gesture, stillness.

Call upon prior knowledge.

Students suggest ways to add clarity.

Mask work requires discipline and respect. Rules are provided to guide the exercises.

Students select a mask and begin to get an understanding of the possible character:

- Choose a mask and to move into a space on their own.
- In this quiet space, over a period of about five minutes, they are asked to really think about this mask, but not to wear it.

Who is this person?

What is their age?

What do they have in their pockets, if anything?

Do they have family?

Do they live alone?

What sort of food do they eat and how will they eat it?

Do they work and if so at what?

How do they spend their evenings?

What sort of posture does this person have?

How does this person move?

Side Coaching is an important role of teacher – guiding and facilitating the exercises. These questions might also be answered through Journal

Try on the mask – if possible use a mirror to see the entire body, try some poses as directed, such as: waving hello (happy) & goodbye (devastated); spying on someone; waiting

- **Walking in Character:** strolling, hurrying, checking each other out, hiding
- **Reflect:** Partner Talk - How does it feel behind the mask? Challenges? Interesting?

What makes for interesting character as shown in the body? Is there more than one way to answer this? Teach students how to provide useful audience feedback.

Lesson Two: Historical context

Time Frame: 1 hour

- **Discuss:** How do other theatre artists use mask? What have students seen in popular culture, movies, mask, internet and contemporary arts?
- **Compare:** How do various cultures use mask to create meaning? What is the difference between ceremonial and sacred uses as opposed to use for entertainment? Find and share examples of each.

A possible area of research could be the Haida and Iroquois nations masks.

- **Historical context:** research masks used during the early days of western theatre in Greece – how were masks made and used during the spring festival of Dionysus? Why did actors wear masks?

Lesson Three: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Time Frame: 1 hour

- **Discuss:** Look at dramatic images and identify focus. Where does your eye go to first in the image? What is the purpose of “focus” in theatre? What are some of the many ways directors create focus on a stage? Why is it important to show “conflict”? How does this help the audience member engage with the story?
- **Tableaux:** In small groups, create tableaux to indicate a “focus and conflict” while in mask. Incorporate status through levels, relationship and body posture. Identify, as a group, observable criteria (such as: where we place each person, how they are posed in relation to others, gesture, tension, eyes, commitment).
Tableaux Examples with conflict:

“The Vacation” What happens when we are not all having fun?

“Writing a Big Test” What if one person is cheating?

“Riding the Bus” What if the driver is dangerous?

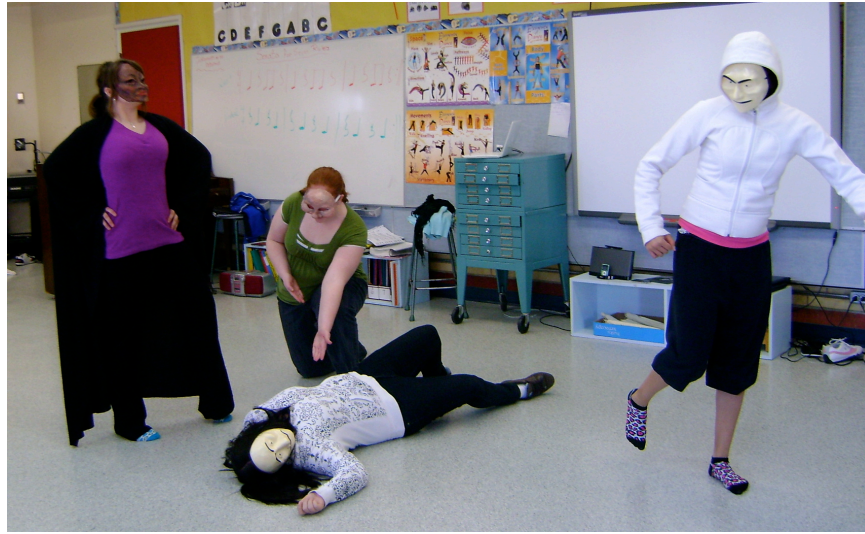
“Scene of an Accident” Who is to blame?

“Meet My Parents” What if they are embarrassing you?

“Winning the Big Game” Who is the winner and who lost?

“Busted” Who is being caught, and at what?”

- **Feedback:** Use the language of drama and the observable criteria (as determined by the group) to give immediate feedback for each tableaux. Encourage students to practice providing appropriate feedback that is specific and about the pose, not the person. Allow time for each group to make adjustments and revisions to the tableaux.
- **Adding Transitions:** Once students have developed the tableaux, they can explore ways to enter into the tableaux and a different way to exit out of the tableaux.



Scene of an accident: use of levels, focus and contrast

Photographs of the tableaux are a great way to give students the chance to critique their own tableaux and make changes. A good reflective assignment is to ask them to take 3 photos: 1) a deliberately poor example (showing what not to do); 2) somewhat improved but shows hesitation and little focus or conflict; and 3) an example of commitment, clarity and is an interesting arrangement, focus and conflict is clear. Swap the series of images between student groups and they can identify the quality and differences for each image. Photos don't have to be printed if you share e-devices.



The Bad Bus Driver: clear roles for each character as shown through body language and appropriate to the mask.



Busted!: Power and status are evident in this tableau.

Lesson Four: Movement and Character

Time Frame: approximately 2 hours

- **Entrances & Exits:** Using the Character Mask, practice Entrances & Exits to music played (use a variety of fun songs with different qualities, such as “Locomotion”, “Walking on Sunshine”, “Staying Alive”, “Pirates of the Caribbean”, etc.) The music helps give an emotional quality, an environment to the scene. Hats, scarves, simple props could be added. Set the room so they can cross in front of the audience (the students). Be prepared to discuss what you have seen from the exercise. Allow only a short time to plan with their partner and work together to determine their entrance & exit in character, draw upon archetypes, clock the audience, use **focus**, and show **tension**.
- **Discussion:** qualities observed, what was most effective, what captures focus and creates tension.
- **Exercises:**
 - a) **“Characters on a Bench” Improv**

One enters, does an action.

Next enters, sees the first and reacts in some way.

First one finds way to exit and another person enters – keep it going.
 - b) **“Use of Narrator”**

Decide on a well-known story or fairy tale and identify the number of characters.

The narrator improvises a new version of the story and the others enact it as told.
 - c) **“Inner Voices”**

Mask characters are engaged in an activity (drawn from a hat).

A second person acts as the inner voice of the masked character, speaking their true thoughts.
- **“Archetypes”:** (see appendix) Read and discuss how these archetypes are used in modern times (TV and film). Can we still identify these attributes? In small groups (3 or 4) – make a plan for a possible **silent scene**, using different archetypes for each person. The characters must be believable in the scene. The scene can be modern – in which case the character “King”

These exercises meet indicators: belief in role; confidence & curiosity; tension; focus; and contrast. Choose exercises purposefully to suit your needs.

might be the CEO of a big company, for example. Remember to identify the relationship and the conflict in the scene. (Appendix: Planning Handout)

- **Creating a Short Silent Scene:** As a class, determine what the criteria should be for a good scene. Return to the scene planned and make revisions based on the exercises completed. Do you have a clear relationship? Do you establish a focus? Is tension evident? Can we identify archetype through the relationship of the characters?
- **Rehearse and share:** Reflect upon the scenes in a written journal.

V. Appendix

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Warm Up Exercises

Trust Balance – partners hold wrists, stand toe to toe and lean back to find perfect balance

Clap Together – stand in a circle, clap as one unit, use various rhythms, build in intensity and slow to a stop

Whoosh – pass the energy around the circle, across, jump over someone, change direction – imagine the energy as a ball you hold in your hands.

Gesture Pass – show a gesture to the next in the circle, they repeat it, pass a new gesture to the next person, they repeat it, and so on all around the circle.

Holding the Plank (*for focus – critical in mask work*)

Eye Contact. Everybody works in pairs. Each pair imagines they have a plank of wood between their eyes. By communicating through their eyes non-verbally, they are ensuring that they always remain at the same distance, no matter what they do – moving round the room, lowering down to the floor. Whatever action they decide to take, they must always ensure that the distance must be exactly the same so that 'the plank' cannot fall.

Status Cards

- Everybody is given a playing card from the pack of card. The joker will have been removed.
- Ace is the lowest status and the King the highest status, followed by the Queen, the Jack, the Ten, nine, eight and so on.
- Each person looks at their card, but no one else must see it.
- They are to adopt the status of their card and walk around the room in the manner of that status.
- They react and interact with each other communicating without speaking.
- When the spontaneous scene has been going for around 5 -7 minutes, the teacher asks everyone to stand in a line according to their status.
- The cards are revealed and the positions of everyone is a good indicator of how well they have communicated their status through physical, non-verbally expression.

Start each lesson with a warm up to bring focus, concentration, co-operation, listening, coordination as needed for the group
Warm Ups

ARCHETYPES (*thanks to Trestle Theatre, UK, <http://www.trestle.org.uk/>)

This is very much a focus on 'status' with the 'fool' being the lowest and the 'king/queen' the highest. The 'innocent' has little more intelligence than the fool, so although their gesture is very high up above their forehead, their lack of memory span governs their response to everything and reduces their place in the hierarchy of status.

1. **FOOL** – (gesture deep down in the groin)
Clumsy; has little interest in life. **Key Word - WHAT**
2. **CARER** (gesture in chest)
Genuinely warm and dependable. **Key Words - THERE! THERE!**
3. **HERO** (gesture in shoulders)
The leader who knows he is strong and can lead and win battles. He will always move to save someone in danger. **Key Words - WHERE'S THE FIRE?**
4. **TRICKSTER** (gesture in jaw)
Thinks s/he's very intelligent and is constantly on the look out for opportunities for his own gain. He/she is always smiling, but the smile has a twist in it.
Key Word - MAYBE
5. **KING/QUEEN** (gesture in forehead)
Has complete power and knows it. She/he presents authority in every way.
Key Words - I AM IN CONTROL
6. **INNOCENT** (gesture above forehead)
Everything is a surprise. Has very little memory, but is interested in absolutely everything.
Key Words - WHAT A SURPRISE!

Everyone in the group becomes each archetype and time is spent ensuring that they are able to develop movements and gestures until they are comfortable with them. They are asked to take up a pose of the 'king/queen' and to hold it. At a given moment they are asked to point to the person they think commands the most authority in the group. (Remind group of how in one workshop they all pointed to one person and this person was pointing to himself. They should of course have all been pointing to themselves!)

Reflections can include consideration of the relationship between archetypes and everyday people; some may feel they easily identify with one or other of the archetypes. There may be connections with some aspects of stylised work, the absurd and grotesque.

Character Work: Planning Short Silent Scenes

Group Members:

Archetypes for the Scene:

Location/Conflict/Action: (suggestions to use, or develop your own idea)

1. Writing a big test, someone is trying to cheat
2. In the emergency room, someone thinks they should be seen first
3. On a park bench, reading a newspaper, other is annoying
4. In a prison, trying to make an escape
5. Working out in the gym, someone thinks they are the best
6. In a theatre, watching a horror film

Notes for the Scene: (describe in point form and include Entrance and Exit; relationship to one another; identify the **conflict, focus, contrast and tension**)

Other Items needed for the scene? (Props or costume?)

Could this scene be developed into a larger work by connecting all the scenes in the class? What would make the scenes connect?

Performance Task Rubric

To create a short silent scene (solo or group) using mask.

Use the outcome-based rubrics to create a rubric specific to the performance task. Invite students to examine the outcomes and identify key criteria that should be considered.

Outcome CP 8.4 Demonstrate how dramatic characters interact in relationships within the drama and/or collective creation.

Beginning - 1	Approaching - 2	Meeting - 3	Excelling - 4
I need assistance to interact in role.	I am able to interact with other characters to create a relationship in drama.	I am able to show confidence in several different roles in drama work and can use the elements of drama to create characters	I can reflect on my own work and the work of others. I demonstrate awareness of how the elements of drama can be manipulated.

Indicators:

- Sustain belief in own roles and in the roles assumed by others for extended periods of time.
- **Demonstrate confidence and curiosity when assuming different kinds of roles in drama work.**
- Describe own roles and specific contributions to the collective drama work.
- **Describe how focus, tension, and contrast function within the drama.**
- Demonstrate awareness of how focus is maintained and shifts during pair, small, and whole group drama work.
- Reflect on sources and functions of tension expressed in relationships among roles or characters portrayed.
- Examine how contrasts among characters function within the drama.

Refer to the Saskatchewan Curriculum Guide [Arts Ed 8](#)

Outcome CP 8.5 Investigate how theatrical elements (e.g., story, character, design, space) are combined to achieve dramatic purpose.

Beginning - 1	Approaching - 2	Meeting - 3	Excelling - 4
I need assistance to create imaginary places and situations for dramatic work.	I am able to create imaginary places and situations for dramatic work.	I am able to identify and manipulate theatrical elements for own or collaborative drama work.	I show ability to analyze theatrical elements to progress the dramatic work. I can be constructively critical of different effects in my own work and the work of others.

Indicators:

- **Identify how theatrical elements can be manipulated to achieve a creative purpose and consider how such elements relate to own drama work.**
- Analyze how each character’s actions and the consequences of those actions affect the progression of the drama.
- Consider and analyze how set, costumes, lighting, and sound/ music design can be manipulated to achieve different effects in own work.
- **Demonstrate imagination when creating imaginary places and situations in own drama work.**
- Analyze the use of movement, and the use of space and time in own work.

Refer to the Saskatchewan Curriculum Guide [Arts Ed 8](#)



Rubric for Collective Creation in Dramatic Projects

	D/Beginning	C/Satisfactory	B/Proficient	A/Excellent
Showing Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not personally involved or engaged in piece Misunderstands intent, characters or progression of piece Satisfied with 1D-dimensional performance, individually and for project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is personally involved in aspects of the piece Adds a personal aspect or twist to a generally understood piece With guidance, builds an area of skills and provides for additional expression With support, extends an aspect of project beyond original conception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds a personal orientation to piece well Seeks to build conception of project beyond immediate Selects one or two aspects of project to extend into a novel area or interpretation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds a deep personal involvement and understanding of piece Seeks to stretch conception of dramatic project Seeks to extend own skills and provides for a variety of expressions Extends aspects of project into novel concepts/techniques/symbols
Creative Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution is minimal and simple Alienates other group members by personal attack rather than constructive criticism Consumes leader/facilitator's time or is isolated Focus is on person, not task Scattered focus; distracts others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to one or two aspects, but is inconsistent Accepts the encouragement of others to participate May be swayed by others to be discouraging Is inconsistent in focus and time on task Remains separate from others in group, or spends time cultivating friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution is consistent, and to most parts of the process; contribution is substantial Encourages others to participate Responds to facilitator Follows leaders thoughtfully Remains focussed on task most of the time Acknowledges the time and effort of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to each part of process, including rehearsal process: contributes meaningfully in the group, encourages others to contribute meaningfully Responds to facilitator with ease and immediacy Assumes leadership role Stays on task Remains focussed Respects time and effort of others
Rehearsal Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are scattered, limited or simple; no focus to build on Works on everything at one time, rather than taking project aspect by aspect Limited understanding of depth, nuance and significance: approach taken is simplistic or fragmentary Details are banal and obvious or not clearly related to story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are generally directed to inform the rehearsal process Inconsistently works on one or several aspects at a time, but focuses with guidance Selects approach quickly and without considering alternatives, and adds some interest Selects some details to outline story and provide interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are coordinated to form dramatic piece and inform the rehearsal process Works in a generally systematic way Selects approach which will provide room for depth and nuance Selects details to fill in and provide depth and interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are formed into dramatic piece (taking it from mind to performance) initiating the rehearsal process Works on one thing at a time (how does it start, what happens next, sequencing) Understands, during the process, whether the approach taken provides depth, nuance and significance in dramatic form Provides details that fill out the story for the audience: make B&W into colour—what needs to be added? Why is this happening?
Suggestcraft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates lack of understanding of general principles of working on stage Contributions sporadic (spotty attendance kills collective effort) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Superficially understands some principals of working on stage Inconsistently organizes and brings piece to some completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands major principles of working on stage Plans and completes necessary tasks to bring piece from imagination through rehearsal to performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the most major and some more technical principles of working on the stage. (playing to the front of audience, being heard, using voice to best advantage, etc.) Plans, efficiently organizes and completes the necessary tasks to bring the piece from imagination, through rehearsal to performance



Rubric for Collective Creation in Dramatic Projects

	1	2	3	4
Use of Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monologues or dialogue simply tell the story didactically Memorization of lines uncertain, and block dramatic characterization as a result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monologues or dialogue sometimes move story along, but may wander or also describe events Some passages have solid enough memorization to allow play for emotional and dramatic elements of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monologues/dialogue mostly moves story along Few minor lapses of memory don't inhibit concentration on emotional and dramatic elements of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses monologues/dialogue as movement or extension of script rather than description of events Flawless memorization of monologues or lines, allowing concentration on emotional and dramatic elements of speech
Imaginative Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piece makes no clear statement or is trite, obvious or trivial Thematic connection is unclear or obviously simplistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piece makes a clear statement Thematic connection is inconsistent or formulaic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piece makes an important statement with clarity Thematic connections to higher statement or meaning are clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piece makes a significant statement with both clarity and nuance Thematic connection to higher statement, or meaning is clear and significant
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not discriminate superior performances from mediocre Focuses on a single element and discusses its contribution to performance in generalized terms without specific support Focuses on own performance above others Sees spurious connections between initial choice and outcome or misses connections Responds to audience from own point of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses on own performances or those of friends With guidance, can see elements in others' performances to emulate With guidance recognizes how major initial choices affect outcome Recognizes generally that audiences respond broadly to various themes Recognizes and discusses generally contributions of some elements to performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes superior performances of others Learns from others' performances and tries to connect to own performance Recognizes connections between initial choices and final outcomes Discusses main effect of thematic content on audience Discusses contribution of most elements to performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands superior performance by others Connects recognition of others' strengths in performance to own performance Identifies precisely how initial choice of material affects outcome Discusses specifically and insightfully how thematic content affects audience Discusses specifically and insightfully contribution of elements to performance
Overall Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance drags, audience is bored and/or confused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance is spotty, audience is polite. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance flows, audience is interested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance sparkles, audience is engaged.

Comments: