

Yes, and....

Improvisation Exercise/Warm Up
From *Raising the Curtain* by Gai Jones

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Grade Level: 3-5+

Elements Addressed: Oral language development, critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, listening skills

Language Arts Core Content Standards Addressed:

Key Ideas and Details

Grade 3

3. Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Grade 4

3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Grade 5

3. Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Comprehension and Collaboration

Grades 3, 4, & 5

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Fine Arts/Theater Standards Addressed:

Standard 2: Use dance, music, theatre/drama and visual arts to express ideas.

K-5 Benchmark 2A: Develop classroom dramatizations that express various moods or emotions (e.g., happy/sad, funny, scary, mysterious, etc.).

Standard 4: Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics of the creative process.

K-5 Benchmark 4A: Collaborate to design, plan, rehearse and perform dramatizations.

Materials:

- Students arranged seated in a circle
- "Rules" of improvisation (see attached)

Vocabulary: Collaborate, story structure, listen

Procedure:

- Students sit in a circle; ask them for a title of an original story (unwritten) that is appropriate for all ages.
- Agree on a story title.
- The first student begins the story in his/her own way (ask for volunteers, let the first student choose the direction around the circle).
- Use something to indicate a change in storytellers—a slide whistle or a chime. The next student begins with "Yes, and..." Each storyteller must begin his/her portion with "Yes, and..."
- Continue around the circle until all students have had an opportunity to contribute to the story. The final student ends the story.
- Compliment students who were able to follow the rules of improvisation and accepted what was given to them.

Evaluation/Assessment: Teacher observation

Modifications/Extensions:

- Give students a topic or theme with which to focus the story.
- Retell a story that was read in class that all the students know.