

# Alienation – The Creature

## The Task

This task was designed as the culminating activity for a drama unit that explored the theme of alienation and respect for diversity. The task had two components – tableaux with transitions and writing in role. Students prepared and performed two tableaux with transitions in a sequence rehearsed and ready for videotaping. They also submitted a response letter, written in role, to the teacher for scoring.

## Tableaux With Transitions

In small groups, students created a sequence made up of two contrasting tableaux and slow-motion transitions. In the first tableau, students depicted the feelings, attitudes, and thoughts of a creature that had been alienated by local villagers. In the second tableau, they depicted the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of the villagers who had exiled the creature. Students moved through a transition in which they transformed themselves from the role and body position of the creature to the role and body position of a villager. To complete the task, the students then moved through a transition back into the original tableau depicting the creature. This sequence was videotaped.

## Writing in Role

Students adopted the role of the creature. From this perspective, they wrote a letter to the villagers in response to a notice of exile and a letter of warning. This notice and letter were provided as a writing stimulus for the students (see Appendix 1 on page 70).

## Expectations

This task gave students the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the following selected expectations taken from the Theory, Creation, and Analysis strands.

### *Students will:*

1. demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of dramatic expression;
2. demonstrate an understanding of drama as a collaborative art form;
3. identify universal themes and issues in drama;
4. demonstrate an understanding of focus and concentration in playing a role;
5. demonstrate an understanding of the process of selecting and organizing dramatic forms and sources to construct a drama to communicate a specific intention;
6. demonstrate an understanding of coordination, spatial awareness, kinesthetics, and gesture in the development of expressive movement;
7. demonstrate effective communication skills, both in and out of role;
8. demonstrate an understanding of how empathy functions as a component of role playing;
9. demonstrate an understanding of “willing suspension of disbelief”.

## **Prior Knowledge and Skills**

Achievement of the following expectations from the Grade 7 drama and dance curriculum was essential for students' success.

*Students will:*

- communicate abstract ideas through drama and dance;
- demonstrate understanding of the motives of the characters they interpret through drama and dance.

Achievement of the following expectations from the Grade 8 drama and dance curriculum was also essential for students' success.

*Students will:*

- write in role in various forms, showing understanding of the complexity of a dramatic situation and using the appropriate vocabulary, tone of voice, and voice for the character portrayed;
- identify ways of sustaining concentration in drama and dance;
- produce work as a member of an ensemble.

It was suggested that, before attempting the tasks, students were expected to have:

- explored the theme of alienation and respect for diversity;
- reviewed the elements of tableaux (e.g., facial expressions, spatial relationships, levels, focus);
- reviewed the movement qualities of an effective slow-motion transition – controlled movement, fluidity, isolation of body parts, and spatial awareness of others;
- had opportunities to represent meaning symbolically, through gesture, expressive movement, visual symbols, and so on;
- experienced writing in role.

## **The Samples of Tableaux on Video**

Only one sample is discussed for the tableaux with transitions for each of levels 1 and 2, while three samples are discussed for each of levels 3 and 4. The samples for levels 3 and 4 are provided on the video that accompanies this document. The samples for levels 1 and 2, however, are not shown on the video, to ensure the anonymity of students who are performing at these levels.

*For information on the process used to prepare students for the tasks and on the materials, equipment, and resources required, see the Teacher Package reproduced on pages 67–71 of this document.*

## Task Rubric – Tableaux With Transitions and Writing in Role

Expectations*	Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Theory (Knowledge/Understanding)</b>					
<b>The student:</b>					
9					
– tableaux	– demonstrates understanding of the fictional circumstances of the drama	– demonstrates limited understanding of fictional circumstances	– demonstrates some understanding of fictional circumstances	– demonstrates considerable understanding of fictional circumstances	– demonstrates a high degree of understanding of fictional circumstances
– writing in role					
6					
– tableaux	– executes the transition using expressive movement	– executes the transition with limited use of expressive movement	– executes the transition with some use of expressive movement	– executes the transition with considerable use of expressive movement	– executes the transition with extensive use of expressive movement
<b>Thinking/Inquiry</b>					
<b>The student:</b>					
8					
– writing in role	– demonstrates empathy when writing from the character's perspective	– demonstrates limited empathy	– demonstrates some empathy	– demonstrates considerable empathy	– demonstrates a high degree of empathy
<b>Communication</b>					
<b>The student:</b>					
5					
– tableaux	– uses the tableaux and expressive movement to communicate contrasting points of view	– uses the tableaux and expressive movement with limited effectiveness	– uses the tableaux and expressive movement with some effectiveness	– uses the tableaux and expressive movement with considerable effectiveness	– uses the tableaux and expressive movement with a high degree of effectiveness
7					
– writing in role	– communicates the character's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes	– communicates the character's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes with limited effectiveness	– communicates the character's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes with some effectiveness	– communicates the character's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes with considerable effectiveness	– communicates the character's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes with a high degree of effectiveness
<b>Creation (Application)</b>					
<b>The student:</b>					
4					
– tableaux	– explores the role with concentration and commitment	– explores the role with limited concentration and commitment	– explores the role with some concentration and commitment	– explores the role with considerable concentration and commitment	– explores the role with a high degree of concentration and commitment
– writing in role					

\* The expectations that correspond to the numbers given in this chart are listed on page 48. Note that, although all of the expectations listed there were addressed through instruction relating to the task, achievement with regard to expectations 1, 2, and 3 was not assessed in the final products.

*Note:* A student whose overall achievement at the end of a course is below level 1 (that is, below 50%) will not obtain a credit for the course.