

Teacher Package

The Arts Exemplar Task Grade 9 Dramatic Arts Teacher Package

Title Alienation – The Creature

Time requirement 3–5 periods of 70 minutes each

Description of the Task*

This exemplar task is designed as the culminating activity for a drama unit that explores the theme of alienation and respect for diversity.

The task has two components:

Tableaux With Transitions

In small groups, students will create a sequence made up of two contrasting tableaux and slow-motion transitions. The first tableau will depict the feelings, attitudes, and thoughts of the creature that has been alienated by the local villagers. The second tableau will depict the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of the villagers who have exiled the creature. Students will move through a transition in which they transform from the role and body position of the creature to the role and body position of a villager. To complete the task the students will then move through a transition back into the original tableau depicting the creature. This sequence will be videotaped.

Writing in Role

Students will adopt the role of the creature. From this perspective, they will write a letter to the villagers in response to a notice of exile and letter of warning. This notice and letter are provided as a writing stimulus for the students (see Appendix 1).

Final Products

Students will:

- prepare and perform two tableaux with transitions in a sequence rehearsed and ready for videotaping;
- submit a response letter, written in role as the creature, to be submitted to the teacher for scoring.

* The task has been adapted from Unit 3, Activity 3, “Alienation – the Beast”, in the course profile for Dramatic Arts, Grade 9, Open (Catholic) and from Unit 1, Activity 2, “Game as Metaphor”, in the course profile for Dramatic Arts, Grade 9, Open (Public).

Expectations Addressed in the Exemplar Task

N.B. While all of the following expectations are addressed through instruction, only expectations 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 will be assessed with the rubric.

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”.

Teacher Instructions

Prior Knowledge and Skills

Several expectations from the Grades 7 and 8 drama and dance curriculum are essential for the students’ success:

Grade 7 Drama and Dance

By the end of Grade 7, students will:

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

Grade 8 Drama and Dance

By the end of Grade 8, 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.

Note: In this task you are encouraged to refer to a “creature” as opposed to a “beast” when setting the dramatic context. This neutral terminology will support empathy for the creature.

These activities will yield additional assessment data about your students. Refer to the course profile appendices for appropriate assessment tools.

Before beginning the task, ensure students have

- been arranged in groups where they can comfortably take risks and work with concentration;
- been immersed in an exploration of the theme of alienation and respect for diversity;
- established a context for the drama by collaboratively building a story about the creature (who, what, where, when);
- reviewed the elements of tableaux – facial expression, spatial relationships, levels, focus, etc.;
- reviewed the movement qualities of an effective slow-motion transition – controlled movement, fluidity, isolation of body parts, spatial awareness of others;
- had opportunities to represent meaning symbolically, through gesture, expressive movement, visual symbols, etc.;
- experienced writing in role;
- been introduced to the task-specific rubric – review the criteria and descriptions of levels of performance with the students and ensure that each student understands them.

Accommodations

Accommodations that are normally provided in the regular classroom for students with special needs should be provided in the administration of this performance task.

You may wish to review the relevant course profile for specific suggestions for accommodations appropriate for students in special education programs.

Materials and Resources Required

- materials for setting the context – poetry, stories, news articles related to the theme of alienation and respect for diversity
- Appendix 1: Notice of Exile With Letter of Warning
- pencils and paper
- music selection
- task rubric
- Appendix 2: Checklist for Daily Drama Participation
- Appendix 3: Self-Assessment of Student Role in Group Activity
- Appendix 4: Checklist for Assessing Writing in Role

Rubric**

Introduce the task-specific rubric to the students at least one day prior to the administration of the task. Review the rubric with the students and ensure that each student understands the criteria and the descriptions for achievement at each level.

Allow ample class time for a thorough reading and discussion of the assessment criteria outlined on the rubric.

Some students may perform below level 1. It will be important to note the characteristics of their work in relation to the criteria in the assessment rubric and to provide feedback to help them improve.

Task Instructions

Provide the following instructions to your students:

Tableaux With Transitions

Part One – Tableau #1

1. In your group, discuss the feelings and experiences of the creature that has lived in isolation for so long. Consider what it is that the creature yearns for. What draws the creature to the village?
2. Work together to create a tableau that clearly and effectively represents the experience of the creature. Find a way to sculpt your bodies that shows the size and shape of these feelings, thoughts, and experiences.
3. Ensure that everyone in the tableau is connected in some way through eye contact and physical contact or proximity (e.g., reaching towards someone but not touching).
4. The communication of your meaning (message, feeling, idea) is of primary importance. Consider the use of symbol or metaphor in your representation of the creature's experience (for example, an unrelated use of symbol or metaphor – escape on the underground railroad might be represented as a bird in flight).
5. Use the elements of tableau in creative ways to convey your meaning. These elements include:
 - choice of levels – high, medium, low
 - relationships in space and with others
 - choice of body shapes – open, closed, off-balance, twisted, supported, etc.
 - focus – eye contact, point of focus
 - emotions – body language and facial expression
 - communication of meaning – literally or metaphorically
6. As in the writing process, it is important to edit your tableau to ensure that it communicates your meaning effectively. Modify and refine the tableau until all group members are satisfied with the artistic choices that have been made.

Part Two – Tableau #2

In the same group, discuss the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the villagers who have listened to the stories and gossip about the creature that has recently been sighted close to the village.

Repeat Steps 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, as outlined above, to show the feelings, attitudes, and concerns of the villagers.

**The rubric is reproduced on page 50 of this document.

**Part Three – Tableaux With Transitions (Rehearsal)
(Creature to Villager to Creature)**

1. Recreate your original tableau. Register the feelings and thoughts you experience in this place. Hold your freeze for 10–30 seconds.
2. As slowly as possible, begin to make the transition from the tableau of the creature to the tableau of the villager. Leave behind the mood and feelings of the first tableau and adopt the mood and feelings of the second tableau, expressing this transition through your movement and facial expressions.
3. Remember to incorporate the following qualities of expressive movement into your transition:
 - Move in slow motion – smooth and fluid movement (no sudden, jagged movement or full stops until the next tableau) – with an awareness of others around you.
 - Full body movement is controlled and deliberate (with focus and concentration).
 - Facial expression communicates the transforming emotions.
 - The new image dramatically contrasts with the first image.
4. Once the entire tableau has been transformed to the perspective of the villager, hold the freeze for 10–30 seconds. Register the thoughts and feelings you experience in this place.
5. When you are ready, make the transition back to the original tableau of the creature. Make sure that this transition is equally powerful and sustained. Hold the freeze in your original tableau for 10–30 seconds.
6. Rehearse the entire sequence several times until it is seamless and fluid. Ensure that the sequence communicates the contrasting experiences (feelings, attitudes, desires) of the creature and the villagers.

Part Four – Tableaux With Transitions (Final Sharing)

Rehearse your sequence of creature to villager to creature again in preparation for your final performance. When ready, share your rehearsed sequence of tableaux with transitions. This will be videotaped for scoring purposes. You may need to repeat the sequence a few times for the camera.

Writing in Role

Remember all the feelings and thoughts you experienced as the creature in the tableaux with transitions sequence. Imagine that the situation is becoming more dangerous for the creature as the fear of the villagers is escalating. Armed guards now surround the forest.

Imagine that you are the creature. Posted to a tree in the forest, you find a notice of exile with a letter pinned to it (see Appendix 1).

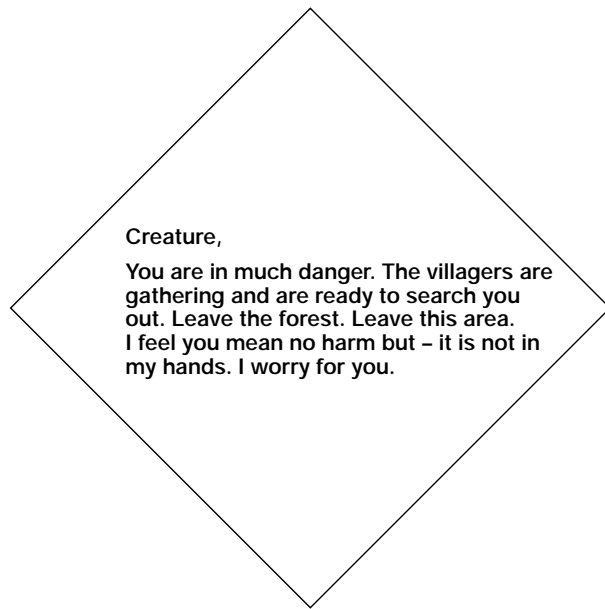
You, the creature, do not wish to leave this forest – it is your home and this place is very special to you. In role as the creature, write a letter to the villagers to help them understand that they have nothing to fear and that this forest is your home. Your letter begins:

Dear Villagers,

I cannot leave this forest.

Appendix 1: Notice of Exile With Letter of Warning

**BE GONE BY NIGHTFALL!
YOU ARE HEREBY EXILED FROM
THIS FOREST.**



Appendix 2: Checklist for Daily Drama Participation

Participation	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
The student:				
- is on time for class				
- is focused in large group				
- actively participates				
- offers ideas				
- takes risks				
- stays on task				
- listens to others				
- encourages others				
- resolves conflicts				
- negotiates with others				

