

Lesson Sample: High School 1, Respond and Connect

Introduction to Theatre is a basic lesson plan designed to work in a high school introductory theatre course. It should be noted, this plan is written with adaptability in mind, and should be used as a framework around which to design individual lesson plans based on the specific student group being taught.

Title:	Introduction to Theatre
Length of Class:	Approximately one 90-minute class period
Skill Level:	Beginner, adaptable for all levels
Domains:	Respond and Connect
Standards:	<p>HS1.T.R1.A: Using participation and/or observation, identify artistic choices made in a theatrical work.</p> <p>HS1.T.Cn2.B: Research how other theatre artists apply creative processes to tell stories in a devised or scripted theatrical work.</p>
Objectives: A. Know B. Understand C. Do	<p>A. Students will know how to observe theatrical works and participate in discussions about theatrical works, paying attention to artistic choices.</p> <p>B. Students will understand how artistic choices are made and how to research and identify others' artistic choices.</p> <p>C. Students will make their own artistic choices to create a symbol and/or ideograph about a theatrical work (story).</p>
Instruction:	<p>Activating Strategy:</p> <p>Tell students they will be playing a short word association game to get them thinking. You will give them a word and they will have one minute to write down as many other words as they can which they associate with the original word. It doesn't matter if their associations make sense or not, this is just to get the creative juices</p>

flowing. Give students the word “Theatre” and begin timing. At the end of one minute, have students share their answers with the class, trying not to repeat any associated words. Ask students to keep their associations in mind as they move on to Activity 1; see if they can find any of their associations in the video.

Activity 1:

Have students watch the TED Talk delivered by theatre and film director Julie Taymor and distribute the comprehension questions. Have students think about their own prior knowledge (associations) and jot down a few responses to the opening questions on the worksheet. Discuss their answers as a class to get them thinking.

(Higher Order Thinking Questions [HOT]: What do you already know? What might this talk be about? How can you tell? What might Julie Taymor have to say about theatre? Is she a reliable source?) Begin playing the video (link under “Materials”) and have students fill in their worksheet as they watch, pausing periodically to discuss. After the video, give students about 5 minutes to discuss their answers in small groups. Once the small groups have had a chance to discuss, bring the class back together for group discussion. Have students compare their answers to the groups’ and classes’ answers.

Activity 2:

Remind students about the ideograph which Julie Taymor spoke of in the video. Show students some examples of ideographs (symbols) and identify the concept each ideograph represents. Ask students if they can think of other ideographs, which haven’t yet been shown. Write their answers on the board, or have them illustrate their answers on the board. Explain that an ideograph is similar to but also quite different from a logo. They are both symbols, but a logo is something that helps people recognize a company, product, or idea while an ideograph attempts to

encompass an entire theme.

Next, introduce the idea that ideographs can be used to represent large ideas and whole productions as Taymor talked about with *The Lion King* (the circle) and *The Tempest* (the sandcastle.) Ask them what ideograph might be appropriate for *Spider-Man*. (Possible answers: a web, a spider, a mask, etc.) Then have students think about ideographs for areas of their life such as school, family, religious affiliations, friends, etc. Have students create some sketches on their own. Then, ask for volunteers to share with the class. **(HOT: What artistic choice was made? How or why do you think this choice was made? How is this similar to and different from others' artistic choices? What accounts for these similarities and differences?)**

Activity 3:

Read the "All the world's a stage" monologue from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* to get students thinking about life as a play. Use either just the first four lines or the whole speech depending on time, skills, abilities, etc. **(HOT: Do you agree with Shakespeare? Why or why not? Where are you in the "seven stages" according to the speech? How is life like a play? How is it NOT like a play?)**

With these answers in mind, have each student imagine their life as a play. Have them think about the main characters, genre, theme, time period, etc., jotting down some answers as they go. Next, have them think about how to illustrate each of the important aspects of their life with an ideograph. Then, give each student a blank index card and ask each of them to create a single ideograph for their life thus far. Have them discuss their ideographs and their artistic choices when finished.

Activity 4:

Have students work in small groups to create a tableaux (essentially

	<p>a living ideograph), which represents theatre as a whole. Remind them to think about Taymor’s TED Talk, their own ideographs, and even their word associations from the Activating Strategy. As each group presents their tableaux, have their peers discuss the different attributes of the “ideograph” and identify elements of the theatre, which they know.</p>
Assessment:	<p>No formal summative assessment is needed for this lesson, but use formative assessment based on observation of how students are participating and how students respond.</p>
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to TED Talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/julie_taymor_spider_man_the_lion_king_and_life_on_the_creative_edge. • Comprehension questions for TED Talk • “All the world’s a stage” speech from <i>As You Like It</i> by William Shakespeare • Index cards
References:	<p>Taymor, J. (Speaker). (2011). <i>Spider-Man, The Lion King and life on the creative edge</i> [Speech]. TED Conferences, LLC.</p> <p>Shakespeare, William. <i>As You Like It</i>.</p>

Julie Taymor:

Spider-Man, The Lion King and Life on the Creative Edge

Before we begin, do some thinking. What might this video be about? What do you know about Julie Taymor, if anything? What do you know about Spider-Man and The Lion King?

Comprehension Questions:

1. What stands out to you in the opening montage?
2. What reason does Ms. Taymor give for why the old men were performing? (If no one was watching, why were they performing?)
3. What does Ms. Taymor say she learned from her first experience in Indonesia?
4. Ms. Taymor speaks to the audience of “suspending their disbelief.” What does it mean to “suspend disbelief?”
5. According to Ms. Taymor, what can cinema do that theatre can’t?
6. Also according to Ms. Taymor, what can theatre do that cinema and television can’t?
7. How does Ms. Taymor say we “get there?”