



# artsNOW

Integrated learning solutions

## USING TABLEAU & ROLE DRAMA TO EXPLORE THE ECOSYSTEM

Grade Band: 4-5

Content Focus: Theatre & Science



### LEARNING DESCRIPTION

Students will analyze the ecosystem by assuming roles of various plants and animals in the food chain. Students will use tableaux to dramatize their place in the food chain. After students share their tableaux, they will write monologues as their plant/animal explaining why they are important to the ecosystem. Students will take their writing and step into a Role Drama where students in each group are placed on a Character Panel in role as their organisms. This will result in a class discussion that explores the interdependence of each plant and animal in the ecosystem.

### LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	"I Can" Statements
How can theatre techniques be used to explore interdependence in an ecosystem?	<p>I can use theatre techniques to demonstrate the role of organisms in the ecosystem.</p> <p>I can demonstrate that I understand the role that organisms play in an ecosystem through monologue.</p>



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## GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p><b>Grade 4:</b> S4L1. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the roles of organisms and the flow of energy within an ecosystem.</p>	<p><b>Grade 4:</b> TA4.CR.1 Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.  TA4.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments.</p>

## SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p><b>Grade 5:</b> 5-LS2-1. Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.</p>	<p><b>Anchor Standard 1:</b> I can create scenes and write scripts using story elements and structure.  <b>Anchor Standard 3:</b> I can act in improvised scenes and written scripts.  <b>Anchor Standard 8:</b> I can relate theatre to other content areas, arts disciplines, and careers.</p>

## KEY VOCABULARY

Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Ecosystem</u> - All the living and nonliving things that interact with each other in an environment</li> <li>● <u>Food web/chain</u> - The path of energy in an ecosystem from plants to animals (from producers to consumers)</li> <li>● <u>Camouflage</u> - Process of animals changing their colors, patterns, and shapes to disguise them from predators or prey</li> <li>● <u>Carnivore</u> - An animal that eats only other animals</li> <li>● <u>Consumer</u> - An animal that gets its energy by eating plants or other animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Theatre</u> - Dramatic literature or its performance; drama</li> <li>● <u>Character</u> - A person, an animal or other figure assuming human qualities, in a story</li> <li>● <u>Voice</u> – An actor’s tool, which we shape and change to portray the way a character speaks or sounds</li> <li>● <u>Body</u> – An actor’s tool, which we shape and change to portray the way a character looks, walks, or moves</li> <li>● <u>Dialogue</u> – Conversation between characters</li> <li>● <u>Scene</u> – The dialogue and action between characters in one place for one</li> </ul>



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Decomposer</u> - A living thing that breaks down the remains of dead organisms</li> <li>● <u>Extinct</u> - A species that is gone forever because all of its kind have died</li> <li>● <u>Herbivore</u> - An animal that eats only plants</li> <li>● <u>Hibernate</u> - When animals go into a deep sleep</li> <li>● <u>Producer</u> - A living thing that makes its own food</li> <li>● <u>Organism</u> - A living thing</li> </ul> | <p>continuous period of time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Improvisation</u> - A creation that is spoken or written without prior preparation</li> <li>● <u>Monologue</u> - A speech by a single character in a play, film, or other dramatic work; often used to give the audience deeper insight into the character's motivations and feelings</li> <li>● <u>Ensemble</u> - All the parts of a thing taken together, so that each part is considered</li> <li>● <u>Tableau</u> - A "living picture" in which actors pose and freeze in the manner of a picture or photograph</li> </ul> |
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## MATERIALS

- Index cards with different types of ecosystems written on them
- Paper
- Pencils

## INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

### Opening/Activating Strategy

*Classroom Tips: Use cueing methods when directing tableau in your classroom: "3-2-1- Freeze" and also the term "3-2-1- Action". "Actors' Neutral" can also be used to focus students and direct students to stop what they are doing and listen to instructions. Make your expectations for when students work together in groups to craft their tableaux explicit. Go over the guidelines before the group work begins. Write them up so that students can refer back to them if they need to during their group working time.*

- Have students spread out throughout the room so that they have their own personal space.
- Start with a physical warm-up to get everyone relaxed and ready to use their bodies expressively. This could include simple stretches, shaking out limbs, and doing some light movement exercises.
- Decide on a simple story, theme, or scene to depict. For example, "A Day at the Market," "A Family Celebration," or "Overcoming a Challenge".
- Divide students into small groups (3-5 people per group works well).
- Each group will create an image (tableau) that represents a moment of the chosen theme or story.
- Encourage participants to think about their body language, facial expressions, and spatial relationships to convey the story or emotion clearly.



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- Have each group present their tableau to the rest of the participants. As they hold the pose, encourage the audience to observe and interpret the story or theme being presented.
- End the exercise with a reflection session where participants can share their experiences, challenges, and what they learned about using their bodies to tell a story or convey an emotion without words.

### Work Session

- Review what students have learned about the ecosystem including key terminology and concepts that are critical to understanding the food web/chain (producers, consumers, herbivores, carnivores).
- Tell students that they will be using tableau to demonstrate the role of organisms in an ecosystem.
- Students should go back to their small groups from the activator.
- Give each group an index card with a type of ecosystem.
  - Students should identify producers and consumers that participate in the food chain/web in their ecosystem. Each person will need to take on the role of one of the organisms.
  - Direct the group to create a tableau that dramatizes the food chain/web with each student taking on the role of one of the organisms they identified.
  - Each small group will share their tableau with the class. Discuss audience participation and etiquette prior to student performances.
  - After each presentation, ask students: Which animal or plant was a producer? Consumer? Decomposer? How did you know this?
- Students will return to their seats and write a monologue as their organism. They will write about why they are essential to the ecosystem and why the ecosystem would not thrive without them.
  - Tell students that a monologue is a speech by a single character in a play, film, or other dramatic work; it is often used to give the audience deeper insight into the character's motivations and feelings.
  - Show students a clip of a monologue or have students read a monologue from a play or other work.
    - Example: *The Lion King* (1994) - Simba's Monologue
      - Context: Simba has grown up away from his kingdom but is reminded of his responsibility and legacy by Rafiki and Mufasa's spirit.
      - Monologue: "I know what I have to do. But going back means I'll have to face my past. I've been running from it for so long. It's just, my father's death is so hard to talk about. I thought I couldn't live up to his expectations. But now I understand. The past can hurt. But the way I see it, you can either run from it or learn from it. I'm ready to take my place in the circle of life."
- After writing their monologues, students will come back together in their groups.
- Explain that students will be playing the roles of their organisms on a panel and the role of a reporter in the next activity.
  - As panel members, students will need to be able to answer questions in first person as the role they play in the ecosystem.
  - As reporters, students will need to ask questions that lead the panelists to explain their role in the ecosystem.



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- Each group should generate a list of questions that they will ask another group when it is their turn to be the reporters.
- Each group will take a turn as the panelists while one group will be the reporters asking questions.
- The objective is to spark a class discussion that analyzes organisms' interdependence on one another in an ecosystem.

### Closing/Reflection

Students will reflect on the process of becoming the character of their organism through tableau and role drama and how it helped them understand the role that their organism plays in the ecosystem. Students can do this as a written reflection, as a whole class, or in small groups.

Finally, students will revise their monologues adding any additional details that came to mind during the role drama portion of the lesson.

## ASSESSMENTS

### Formative

Teachers will assess students' understanding of the content throughout the lesson by observing students' participation in the activator, review of ecosystems, contributions in small group work to create tableaux and role drama, and conferencing with students during the writing process.

### Summative

#### CHECKLIST

- Students can use tableau to demonstrate the role of their organism in the ecosystem.
- Students can demonstrate that they understand their organism's role in the ecosystem through monologues.
- Students can demonstrate that they understand the role that their organism plays in the ecosystem through role drama.

## DIFFERENTIATION

#### Acceleration:

- Students can create a character profile of their organism including what they would look like, personality characteristics, hopes and fears. Students should include how they protect themselves from predators. This will allow students to embody their organism more fully.
- Students can write a scene using dialogue between the organisms in their ecosystem. They should include a conflict and resolution.
- Students can write a scene using dialogue introducing two different organisms from different ecosystems.

**Remediation:** Instead of giving each group different ecosystems, use one ecosystem for the class and identify the producers and consumers in that ecosystem. Individual groups can then decide which producers and consumers they want to use in their tableau and role drama.



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

NA

*\*This integrated lesson provides differentiated ideas and activities for educators that are aligned to a sampling of standards. Standards referenced at the time of publishing may differ based on each state's adoption of new standards.*

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