



artsNOW

Integrated learning solutions

THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT READER'S THEATER

Grade Band: 4-5

Content Focus: Theatre & ELA



LEARNING DESCRIPTION

In this lesson students will work collaboratively to understand the characters of a story through a reader's theatre performance. Students will embody one character using their voices and bodies to portray the character's feelings throughout the story. Through the use of theatre techniques, students will gain a greater understanding of the setting, characters, conflict, resolution, and theme of the story.

LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions

"I Can" Statements



artsNOW

We bring learning to life.

10 Glenlake Parkway, Suite 130, Atlanta, GA 30328
www.artsnowlearning.org

How does using voice and body help us to understand a character?	I can portray a character within the context of a story using my body and voice.
What are the setting, characters, conflict, resolution, and theme of the story?	I can identify the setting, characters, conflict, resolution, and theme of a story.
How do costumes and props enhance a performance?	I can create prps and costumes for my performance.

GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Grade 4: ELAGSE4RL2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.</p> <p>ELAGSE4RL3 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).</p> <p>Grade 5: ELAGSE5RL2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.</p> <p>ELAGSE5RL3 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).</p>	<p>Grade 4: TA4.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. TA4.PR.1.a Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate a character's thoughts, emotions, and actions. TA4.PR.1.b Use body and movement to communicate a character's thoughts and emotions. TA4.PR.1.c Collaborate and perform with an ensemble to present theatre to an audience.</p> <p>Grade 5: TA5.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. TA5.PR.1.a Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions of a character. TA5.PR.1.b Use body and movement to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions of a character. TA5.PR.1.c Collaborate and perform with an ensemble to present theatre to an audience.</p>

SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Grade 4: ELA.4.AOR.1.1 Explain how setting and conflict cause characters to change and how conflict(s) contributes to plot development.</p>	<p>Anchor Standard 3: I can act in improvised scenes and written scripts. T.P NL.3 I can use body and voice to communicate character traits and emotions in a guided drama experience.</p>



We bring learning to life.

ELA.4.AOR.2.1 Identify and explain an explicit or implied theme and how it is developed by key details in a literary text.

Grade 5:

ELA.5.AOR.1.1 Analyze how setting, characters, and conflict impact plot development.

ELA.5.AOR.2.1 Explain the development of an explicit or implied theme over the course of a literary text.

KEY VOCABULARY

Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Setting</u> - Where and when a story takes place● <u>Characters</u> - A person, animal, or imaginary being that takes part in the events of the story● <u>Conflict</u> - A problem or struggle that the characters face. It drives the action and makes the story interesting.● <u>Resolution</u> - How the problem or conflict gets solved; where the story comes to an end, and the characters' challenges are resolved● <u>Theme</u> - The main message, idea, or lesson the author wants to share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Dialogue</u> - A conversation between two or more persons● <u>Character</u> - An actor or actress in a specified role● <u>Script</u> - The written version of a play, movie, or other acted performance● <u>Props</u> - Items that actors use in a performance to depict real-life objects. Props can also be used to help students brainstorm for their writing or character study.● <u>Body</u> - Actors use their body to become a character through body posture and movement. What your mind thinks, what your emotions feel, all of this is supposed to show up in your body.● <u>Facial expression</u> - Using your face to show emotion● <u>Gesture</u> - An expressive movement of the body or limbs● <u>Voice</u> - Actors use their voice to be heard by the audience clearly. Actors must also apply vocal choices such as pitch, tempo,



We bring learning to life.

	<p>and volume to the character they are dramatizing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Tone</u> - The way your voice sounds when you speak. It shows how you feel, like being happy, sad, excited, or serious. ● <u>Tableau</u> - A frozen picture representing a scene or moment in a story that occurs during a theatrical performance. When creating a tableau in theatre, the following principles should be applied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create body levels (low, mid, high); ○ Use facial expressions to communicate thoughts and feelings; ○ Show relationships between the various characters in the setting; and ○ Make sure the audience can all see your face. ● <u>Statues</u> - Frozen poses or shapes made by actors to represent a character, idea, or moment in a story
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

MATERIALS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class set of The Day the Crayons Quit Reader's Theatre script ● Cardboard, construction paper, tape, and any other materials needed to create costumes and props ● Dice (at least two for the whole class) ● List of six sample sentences printed or projected

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

<p>Opening/Activating Strategy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage students in a warm-up where they can practice speaking with expression and fluency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start by explaining that they'll practice saying sentences in different expressive ways. Share how emotions and tone make stories fun and engaging. ○ Assign one die to represent an emotion (e.g., 1 = happy, 2 = sad, 3 = surprised, etc.). ○ Assign another die to pick a sentence from the list.



We bring learning to life.

- A student rolls the dice to determine their sentence and emotion.
- They say the sentence aloud, embodying the emotion as much as possible, using gestures, tone, and facial expressions.
- The rest of the class guesses the emotion or gives positive feedback like, “You sounded so excited!”.
- To make it collaborative, pair students to have mini conversations where they act out their sentences and emotions.

Work Session

- Pass out the script to students. Read through the script once as a whole class. Teacher can decide how best to assign reading roles.
- After the read through, have students discuss in small groups the characters and their emotions.
- Assign each group one character to discuss in detail.
 - Students should identify and write down the character’s emotions and characteristics.
 - Then, they should decide what type of voice the character would have and how the character would speak.
 - Next, they should decide how their character would move.
 - Have students rehearse lines in unison in their groups using their voices and bodies to embody the characters.
 - Teacher should circulate the room to check student progress and understanding.
- Performance option 1:
 - Have students decide whether they would like to audition to perform their group’s character in a class performance. The teacher will select the cast list.
- Performance option 2:
 - Divide students into new groups so that one person from each character group is in the new group.
 - Have students rehearse the script in their new group and then perform for the class.
- Performance option 3:
 - Have students perform the script as a whole class. When it is each character’s turn to speak, the group will speak and use their bodies to act out their character in unison from their desks.
- *Optional: Students can work together to create simple props and costumes for the performance.*

Closing/Reflection

- Students can give the performers two glows and a grow.
- Discuss the conflict, resolution, and theme of the story as a class.
- Students should respond to the following reflection prompts either verbally or in written format:
 - How did using your voice and body help you understand your character?
 - How would you describe your character? What were their feelings?

ASSESSMENTS

Formative



We bring learning to life.

- The teacher will observe whether:
 - Students can identify characters' emotions.
 - Students can use their voices and bodies to embody a character.
 - Students can read lines with fluency and expression throughout the rehearsal process.

Summative

CHECKLIST

- Can students read their lines with fluency and expression in the final performance?
- Can students use their bodies and voices to express their character's emotions?
- Can students identify the conflict, resolution, and theme of the story?

DIFFERENTIATION

Accelerated:

- Have the class perform the script using Performance Option 2.
- Have students create props and costumes for their performances.

Remedial:

- Have the class perform the script using Performance Option 3.
- Use tableau and statues to support student comprehension of the script prior to engaging in character analysis.

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.*

Ideas contributed by: Michelle Rheaume and Katy Betts

Revised and copyright: 2025 @ ArtsNOW



We bring learning to life.