

Shadow Puppet Storytelling

Discipline

Visual Art

Grade and/or Course Level(s)

2nd Grade

Overview

Students will understand that information passes from generation to generation through the ancient tradition of storytelling. Students will recognize that puppetry is a visual expression of storytelling used by many cultures for entertainment, community gatherings, to convey information and to encourage understanding and/or empathy. Students will create a shadow puppet and perform a short puppet show based on a folk tale, tall tale, or poem.

Essential Understanding, Knowledge, Skills, and/or Processes

- Stories are central to human cognition and communication.
- Storytelling encourages readers or listeners to envision the characters and settings. This skill of visualization is essential as student progresses to more complex and abstract thinking.
- Visualization
- Creative thinking strategies
- Drawing skills
- Cutting skills
- Storytelling

Outcomes

- Students will create their own story or select from a literary source such as a folk tale, tall tale, or poem.
- Students will use creativity and visualization to create one or more shadow puppets to depict a character(s) in a story.
- Students will explore ways to animate their puppet to communicate the story in class or on video.

SOLs

- 2.1 The student will apply creative thinking to art making
 - b) Depict imaginary, characters, scenes or experiences.
- 2.11 The student will apply connections between the arts by incorporating or responding to music, theatre, or dance in their artwork.

- 2.17 The student will create works of art inspired by a variety of concepts, themes, and/or literary sources.

Materials

- Black railroad board or heavy black construction paper
- Color pencil in white or other light color
- Block Eraser
- Popsicle sticks or wooden coffee stirrers
- Masking Tape
- Scissors
- Hole Puncher
- Paper Fasteners
- Large trifold presentation board
- Large sheet of white paper
- Flashlight or spotlight study lamp

Student/Teacher Actions

1. The teacher should lead a conversation for students to make real world connections by recalling personal experiences/memories about performances, perhaps a ballet or band performance at school. Have students think of and discuss puppets they are familiar with, such as Sesame Street characters, Muppets, hand puppets, etc., from kindergarten or first grade.
2. The teacher explains that the oral tradition of storytelling allowed information to pass from generation to generation long before paper and books were common and affordable.
3. The teacher shares examples of diverse cultural variations of puppetry developed throughout many parts of the world.
4. The teacher directs students in selecting or creating content for the performance. Some options may be poems, folk tales, fables, fairy tales, or short stories. Students will identify the purpose of their story, such as conveying information, encouraging people to understand and empathize, or purely for entertainment.
5. Once the story is identified, the teacher will guide students to imagine and sketch a character fitting the storyline. The character could be a human, monster, mythological, or any other creature that fits the storyline.
6. The teacher instructs students to draw the developed character onto a black sheet of construction paper or black railroad board using a white or light-colored pencil or crayon. Details should be limited within the outline of the character but detailed around the perimeter.
7. The students will then cut around the perimeter of the character and remove any inside details (such as eyes) using the fold and snip method. Hole punches can be used to make additional designs.
8. (Optional/Extension) The teacher demonstrates the use of paper fastener to create movable parts on the puppet.
9. The students adhere a craft stick to the back of the character using tape.
10. Teachers and students both can watch this [shadow puppet video](#) for inspiration and instructions.

11. Have students prepare to enact their stories with their shadow puppets. For in-person learning the teacher can provide a shadow screen for students to perform their stories. To create a screen, hang a sheet from the ceiling or a frame or use a trifold presentation board with a large square cut out of the center panel. Tape a sheet of white paper larger than the cut-out square to the back of the board. For virtual learning, students may turn down the lights and use a flashlight to project the puppet image onto a wall.
12. Students will use the shadow puppet to perform their prepared stories. During virtual or in-person learning performances can be recorded and uploaded on a digital platform (such as Flipgrid or Padlet) and shared with the teacher and students.

Assessment Strategies

- Students may perform their puppet show during a class session, record the puppet show on a phone, video, or use flip grid to share with the teacher and other students.
- Students respond to the puppet and performance through self-assessment and peer discussion.
- Students will reference a teacher rubric for overall performance expectations.

Differentiation Strategies

- Students can create a storyboard to use as a visual guide laying out the actions and words to use in the puppet show.
- Students can observe in mirrors to practice moving the puppet and telling the story.
- Culturally responsive instruction allows students to select stories traditional to the culture they embrace making stories personally relevant.
- English Learners can develop their language skills (writing, listening and speaking) through the literature component of this lesson.
- English Learners and all students can deepen their understanding when they engage with material in multiple ways. This lesson involves writing, speaking, and drawing, construction, performing and listening.

Extensions and Connections

- Students can build a shadow puppet theater at home by cutting a square hole out of the middle panel of a trifold and replacing it with a piece of white paper or problem-solve to construct their own theater.
- Challenge students to use a dictionary or thesaurus to expand word choices in their story or play script.
- Students can perform investigative research to discover the science behind light and shadows.
- Students can look for ways to share their story performances with a broader audience.
- Students can create a soundtrack of music and sound effects to support the performance.

Shadow Puppetry - Sample Rubric

<p>Goal 1:</p> <p>Student shows understanding of puppetry as an artistic form of storytelling and participates in peer discussions about storytelling.</p>	<p>Student's performance exceeds standard /expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance meets standard/expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance is approaching standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>	<p>Student's performance is below standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>
<p>Goal 2:</p> <p>Student creates his or her own story or selects from a literary source such as a poem or folk tale.</p>	<p>Student's performance exceeds standard /expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance meets standard/expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance is approaching standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>	<p>Student's performance is below standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>
<p>Goal 3:</p> <p>Student creatively designs and constructs one or more shadow puppets to depict a character(s) in the story.</p>	<p>Student's performance exceeds standard/expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance meets standard/expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance is approaching standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>	<p>Student's performance is below standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>
<p>Goal 4:</p> <p>Student animates their puppet in a theatrical show to tell a story (in person or on video).</p>	<p>Student's performance exceeds standard/expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance meets standard/expectation and student consistently produces outstanding work.</p>	<p>Student's performance is approaching standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>	<p>Student's performance is below standard/expectation and student inconsistently applies learned skills.</p>