



Class Acts Arts
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TEACHER'S GUIDE

Mary Beth Bowen

Greek Myth Readers Theatre Residency

OBJECTIVES OF WORKSHOP:

Students will:

- Become more confident, fluent readers
- Strengthen public speaking skills (vocal projection, enunciation & expression)
- Learn acting skills (body, voice, imagination)
- Strengthen ability to concentrate and work as a team
- Explore a Greek myth
- Experience the thrill of performing for an audience

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM:

Students strengthen reading fluency and explore Greek mythology as they read, rehearse and perform a Readers Theatre script based on a Greek myth. They learn the basics of acting and improve their public speaking skills. Students also unleash their creativity as they invent gestures, sound effects, facial expressions and humor to make their Readers Theatre script come alive. Ms. Bowen brings out the actor in even the shy and hesitant, building confidence and improving students' ability to speak loudly, clearly, and with emotional expression. The six-hour residency (six 55-minute sessions) culminates with each 3rd grade class presenting a morning performance for parents.

I. PRE-WORKSHOP

A. Students should know:

- 1) A myth is a story that ancient people told to try to make sense of their world.

- 2) People in Ancient Greece told myths about heroes, heroines, gods and goddesses and the creation of the world.
- 3) Greek mythology refers to the myths told by the Ancient Greeks.

B. VOCABULARY

Ms. Bowen will teach the vocabulary words below, as she introduces students to the basics of acting.

imagination	The part of your brain you use when you pretend
concentration	When you are so focused that nothing can distract you
cooperation	When you follow directions and work well with other people
cue	A signal for the actor to do something
to gesture	To use your hands and arms to communicate silently
a focal point	A point (usually on the wall) that you can focus on to help you concentrate

II. WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

The workshop actively involves students every single minute.

Students will:

- Use their bodies and voices to represent a variety of characters
- Use gesture to communicate ideas and emotions
- Use sound effects to communicate emotions and actions
- Dramatize characters from a Greek myth
- Read a Readers Theatre script based on the myth
- Create gestures and sound effects for the script
- Rehearse the script, using the gestures and sound effects they created
- Project their voices, enunciate consonants and speak with emotional expression during vocal exercises, rehearsal and performance.
- Perform for parents

III. WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

A. How can your product or skill be applied to the curriculum?

Combining spoken word with gesture is a powerful learning tool. It can increase reading comprehension and help students retain curriculum content information. It can be used in any curriculum, including language arts, science and social studies.

B. Extension Activities to extend this workshop experience into the classroom:

- 1) Students create gestures for historical figures (e.g. *Betsy Ross, Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr.*).
- 2) Teacher writes vocabulary word definitions on board. Teacher asks students to create gestures to act out the underlined words.

(Example: “An avalanche is made up of stones or snow rolling down a mountain.”)

- 3) Working in small groups, students create gestures to act out sentences from curriculum text. Students can perform the sentences for each other.

(Example: *Farmers prefer to settle in flat and open areas such as plains and valleys. It’s a bad idea to grow crops on a mountain, because a mountain has cold temperatures and rocky soil.”)*

- 4) When discussing a book with students, the teacher can enliven the interchange by asking students to describe the characters with gesture, facial expression and sound effects.

Teacher: *Can you show us what Laura’s face looked like when she realized that Pa was lost in the blizzard?*

Teacher: *Can you make a sound effect for the sound of the wind whipping against the log cabin?*

Teacher: *Can you show us a gesture for how Laura reacted when Pa walked through the door?*

- 5) The teacher reads a Greek myth, a storybook or poem with students. Teacher then asks students to create gestures, sound effects and facial expressions for the characters and actions.

IV. STUDENT RESOURCES

D'Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar Parin. D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths. New York City: Doubleday, 1962.

McCaughrean, Geraldine. The Orchard Book of Greek Myths. London: Orchard Books, 1992.

Williams, Marcia. Greek Myths. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 1992.

V. TEACHER RESOURCES

Flynn, Rosalind M. Dramatizing the Content with Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre, Grades 6-12. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2007. This book is currently out-of-print, but can be ordered at <https://wwwcreatespace.com/3721357>

Kelner, Lenore Blank. The Creative Classroom: A Guide for Using Creative Drama in the Classroom, PreK-6. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993

Kelner, Lenore Blank. 1990. Creative Drama in the Elementary Classroom. Video Cassette. Silver Spring, Md. Interact Story Theatre.