

Song Writing with familiar Melodies

By Lyn Vanover, ArtSpace Charter School

Third Grade Vertebrate song

Melody "I'm a Little Teapot"

Procedure:

1. Students are introduced to the five classes of vertebrates
2. Student s are divided into 5 groups and given non-fiction reading passages on one of the animal classes. they read and take notes.
3. Whole group: class sings "I'm a little teapot" together.
4. Students are given the lyrics to count and record the syllables in each line
5. As a class students write the first verse of the song:

Vertebrates

We are vertebrates we have backbones

Fishes, birds, and amphibians

Reptiles too, but no insects.

6. Then each group creates a verse about their animal class
7. Each group sings their verse for the class.(assessment opportunity)
8. Whole class sings the song together with all the verses.
9. Songs can be used anytime in the upcoming weeks to review content.

"Time for a singing test, "teacher states and initiates the song. Class joins in singing together.

Verses written by small groups:

Reptiles

We are the reptiles we have scales
I am a turtle, you are a snake
We are cold-blooded, we go dormant
Most have four legs but some move without.

Fish

We're the little fish with bass and trout
Here are our gills and here are our fins
We're under water here us go glub,
Just catch me with a pole and pull me out.

Amphibians

We are amphibians, cold blooded too
Some are frogs and some are newts
Most of us have four legs and a tail too
We all like water and that is true.

Mammals

We are the mammals we don't lay eggs
We have backbones and we're vertebrates
We're warm blooded and have fur on our skin
We each have a talent and that's the end.

Birds

We are little birdies with hollow bones
Here are our wings and here are our beaks
When you try to chase me, I fly away
And I lay hard shelled eggs.



A+ Schools Program
of the North Carolina Arts Council



8 STEPS TO GROUP PLAY-MAKING

Joshua Batenhorst, A+ Fellow (Theatre Arts), ArtSpace Charter
josh.batenhorst@artspacecharter.org

Session 1 – Groundwork/Brainstorming - “Yes” Session

This session covers content areas, themes and topics for the narrative. The group is either introduced to or reviews content that is essential to the integrated nature of the play. The play’s “theme” is developed as well as its “style.” All ideas should be honored and an attempt should be made to say “yes” to all ideas.

Session 2 – Plot and Character 1 – Who are you?

During this session, a plot is devised that explores the theme, topic and style. Students choose and develop characters that would work within the plot scheme.

Session 3 – Plot and Character 2 – Finalize Plot/Develop Characters

Students develop characters even further with reference to finalized plot. What is important to the character? How do they walk? Talk? Relate to others?

*****Scripting***** Between session 3 and 4 the play is scripted as a first draft by the lead teacher or team of writers (depending on grade level).

Session 4 – Read thru– First Draft

Students engage in a read-thru of the first draft of the play. Changes and editions are considered and implemented as needed. Students are asked to begin memorizing lines as homework.

*****Design/Production***** Alongside sessions 5-8, students, parents other teachers should assume technical roles and gather or build sets, costumes and props. These roles include costumes, lights, sound, props, and front of house (i.e. tickets, programs, displays, etc.)

Session 5 - Blocking Period

The play is blocked/staged with consideration to set/story/motivation and general principles of blocking (i.e. adjusting staging to include audience focus).

Session 6 – Rehearsal Period 1– Work Thru

The play is rehearsed section by section. Emphasis is on delivery of lines for dramatic effect, intention and focus.

Session 7 – Rehearsal Period 2 –Off Book

Actors are asked to be completely “off-book” (have their lines memorized). Emphasis shifts to focus, action, interpretation and questions of overall effect.

Session 8 – Rehearsal Period 3 – (One – Four Days) -- Tech/Dress Rehearsal

Technical elements (lights, sound, set, props, costumes) are added until the play is “Production” ready.



A+ Schools Program
of the North Carolina Arts Council



Principles of Group Playwriting

Joshua Batenhorst, A+ Fellow (Theatre Arts), ArtSpace Charter
josh.batenhorst@artspacecharter.org

I. Determine the purpose of the project.

Essential Questions: Is this project meant to teach new information or review learned material? Is it a "writing" project? A "core curriculum" project? A performance project? Who will draft the final script – students/teachers/lead teacher? How does authorship affect learning? What are we learning when we perform something that we did not write vs. something that we wrote?

II. Determine the topic, develop the plot.

EQ: What is the play about? What facts must be covered? What is the "best" way to explore the facts? Are there familiar stories that might help (fairy tales, folk tales, etc.)?

III. Honor all ideas – Say "Yes" more than "No."

EQ: Who might get "left out?" Who is "hiding?" Whose creativity is being affirmed? Who is truly engaged?

IV. Everybody gets a line (at least) and the lines push limits.

EQ: What will this role teach this student about – Leadership? Service? Respect? Effort? Am I being fair?

V. Set a date – Theatre is an art of process AND production.

EQ: Is there time for everyone to learn all their lines/blocking? Is there enough time to gather/build props/costumes/ lights/ sound? Will the final production be a good indicator of the group's aesthetic understanding and collective skill set?

Remember:

Expect Surprises, both pleasant and unpleasant.

Moments of deepest frustration are indicators of an impending breakthrough.

The final product may or may not be an indicator of the quality of the process.

Notes/Ideas: