

**Standards,
Benchmarks &
Indicators Covered in
This Unit**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

DRAMA

ELA STANDARD 3

Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies

➤ **Benchmark E**

Demonstrate comprehension by responding to questions (e.g. literal, informational and evaluative).

Indicator gr3:7

Answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions to demonstrate comprehension of grade-appropriate print texts and electronic and visual media (in this instance, a dramatic experience).

ELA STANDARD 5

Reading Applications: Literary Text

➤ **Benchmark B**

Use supporting details to identify and describe main ideas, characters and setting.

Indicator gr3:2

Use concrete details from the text (play) to describe characters and setting.

ELA STANDARD 6

Writing Process

➤ **Benchmark B**

Determine audience and purpose for self-selected and assigned writing tasks.

Indicator gr3:3

Develop a purpose and audience for writing.

(continued)

What Do You Think?

Kid Critics Respond to Drama

Overview

Students write a newspaper review, using the prompts provided, to evaluate and critique a live performance or a classroom theatre workshop or residency.

By the End of this Unit, Students Will Be Able to:

- Identify and defend their own interpretations of a performance or other drama experience.
- Apply a set of criteria for evaluation of theatrical and classroom experiences.
- Organize their observations and opinions into a 3-5 paragraph essay.
- Self-assess their writing process.

Student Work Product

- Observation Checklist
- Writing Checklist
- Written (3-5 paragraphs) review of arts experience

Time

- Three or four 30-40 minute sessions (depending on the class)
- Attendance at a theater performance or classroom theatre residency or workshop (length varies by engagement)

Required Materials

- Paper and pencils
- Reviews or other materials from Arts Provider

Appropriate Engagements

- Theatre Performance (play, musical, opera), school-site or field trip
- In class theatre residency/workshop

Teacher/Arts Specialist Preparation

If your building has an arts specialist (or other staff member) with a drama background, share this curriculum unit with them. Invite their input; ask questions. The two of you may choose to team teach the unit, or the specialist may choose to incorporate some of the curricular activities into his/her class time with students.

Teacher/Arts Provider Preparation

The teacher and arts provider should have a conversation or email exchange. Discuss the lesson unit and ask questions. When possible, the arts provider will:

- Provide the teacher with reviews, programs or other written materials about the engagement/organization that students may reference when writing their reviews.

Teacher Preparation

Familiarize yourself with Improvisation Rules & Set-Up, directly below:

PROCEDURAL LESSON

Improvisation: Rules & Set-Up

Overview: This activity will introduce the rules and set-up for improvisation

ELA STANDARD 7

Writing Applications

- **Benchmark B**
Write responses to literature (drama, a play) that summarize main ideas and significant details and support interpretations with references to the text.

Indicator gr3:2

Write responses to novels, stories and poems (a play, drama) that demonstrate an understanding of the text and support judgments with specific references to the text (experience).

DRAMA STANDARD 3

Analyzing and Responding

- **Benchmark B**
Explain the impact of choices made by artists (e.g., playwrights, actors, directors, designers) in dramatic/theatrical works or experiences.

Indicator gr3:3

Identify and defend their own interpretations of a character.

- **Benchmark C**
Apply criteria for evaluating a theatrical work.

Indicator gr3:5

Apply a set of criteria for evaluation of theatrical experiences.

DRAMA STANDARD 4

Valuing Drama/Theatre/Aesthetic Reflection

- **Benchmark A**
Apply personal criteria for evaluating drama/theatre works of experiences.

Indicator gr3:1

Use personal criteria to discuss their responses to a drama/theatre work or experience.

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

(Teachers: these definitions are primarily targeted for an adult reader; to use them with your kids you may need to simplify the language.)

Character: a person in a play created by the playwright and represented by an actor.

Costume: What the actor wears to represent and create the character.

games. Once understood, students can apply them to various activities yet to come.

Time: 10 minutes

Instructional Procedures:

1. Clear a space in the room and have students make a **circle** of chairs. (Pre-plan how to clear the space in an orderly fashion.)
2. The **playing area** is inside the circle of chairs. All games must take place in the playing area; you cannot go all over the room.
3. If students are sitting in their chairs and watching, they are the **audience**.
4. If a participant needs his or her chair for the game, he/she can take it into the **playing area**.
5. When you say **action**, the game **starts**. When you say **cut**, the game is **over**, students must **freeze** in their place.
6. In “improvisation,” there are no right or wrong answers. Participants must **stick to the rules** of the game and use their imaginations.
7. In “improvisation,” you must never say **no**. Once something is spoken, it is a fact for the story and it is the actor’s job to build on that fact.
8. **SIDE COACHING:** During an improvisation game, the director/teacher will sometimes find it necessary to remind the students of the game rules or set-up to keep them on focus.

BEFORE THE ENGAGEMENT
Pre-Engagement Class Activities

Two 30-40 minute sessions

Instructions

1. Explain **Improvisation Rules and Set Up** to students.
2. Do “**Character Circle**” **Procedural Lesson** (directly below) so students understand the notion of “character”

PROCEDURAL LESSON

Character Circle

Overview: This is a small-group improvisation exercise to help students understand the “who” or character of a scene, and also explores the idea of “relationships” between two characters. This not only fosters creativity, but encourages students to consider character motivation, detail, and the connectedness between two characters in a written or dramatic work.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: flashcards with examples of relationships written on them (e.g. father/child, policeman/speeder, boss/worker)

Instructional Procedures:

- a. Review improvisation rules and set up.
- b. Choose one student to stand in the center of the **playing area**.
- c. Choose 4-6 additional students to stand in a circle around him/her.

Critic: a person who analyzes and interprets works of art, theatrical performances, movies, etc.; may be a professional (imagine a film review in a newspaper) or not (imagine yourself!)

Critique: an article or essay evaluating a literary, artistic or other work; a detailed evaluation; a review.

Note: you may want to talk to students about the difference between a critique and criticism. A critique may or may not include a criticism (negative statement) of the reviewed work.

Evaluate: To judge, to rate, to grade.

Lighting: the quality and angle of light used on the stage (ex: color, light from the front, bright, dim, Did you see the lighting instruments?)

Observe: To watch attentively, carefully; to notice

Opinion: a message expressing a belief about something. An “I think” or “I believe” or “I feel” statement.

Residency: when an artist is engaged to work at a particular place for a particular period of time

Review: an article or report reflecting a personal opinion on a book, play, recital, film, etc.; critique; evaluation.

Setting: the location of the play; can be a physical location (ex: a bedroom, a park, a living room, etc.) or can be a mood, feeling or adjective (ex: cluttered, dirty, neat, clean, bright)

Sound: anything the audience hears during the performance (sound effect such as wind, crickets, thunder, etc., and music or recorded voices).

Vocal Quality: how the actor uses his/her voice to create and represent the character (ex: high voice, deep voice, squeaky voice, loud voice, soft voice, etc.)

Workshop: a (usually) brief educational program for a small group of people that focuses on techniques and skills in a particular field

d. Teacher repeats the following to students:

“This game works with the “who are you?” in a scene: the character. When an actor walks out on stage, the audience does not know who they are until another actor walks out on stage and begins to talk to him/her. We start to learn more about the characters by the way they relate to each other.”

e. Rules of the activity:

i. One group of students stands in the *playing area*. The rest of the class will serve as the *audience*.

ii. Teacher passes out cards (each with one relationship written on it) to the 4-6 students in the circle. Each student receives his own individual card and should not share it with anyone.

iii. The student in the *center* of the circle faces one of the individuals in the *outside circle*. The person on the *outside* will begin to talk with the person in the *center*. Based on that information, the person in the *center* must figure out who the person on the *outside* is pretending to be. For example: If a student on the outside has a card that reads “Mother/Child,” she might say to the person in the center, “Unless you clean your room, you’re grounded!”

iv. Once the student in the *center* has figured out who the person on the *outside* is, he engages in a conversation as that character.

v. The student in the *center* continues this process with all of the individuals in the outside circle.

f. As the teacher facilitates the various groups, say “*Action*” to start. Once a character is established and a conversation is underway, say “*Next*” and move onto the next person/character. After everyone has had one turn, call “*Cut*.” Ask the audience to tell who each person was and what the relationship was.

g. Discuss each character in the circle. What clues were given that helped decide who they were? Note how this is similar to reading & good writing: what clues in the text reveal traits and qualities about the character(s)?

This is the end of the Character Circle activity.

3 . In the same or different session, do “**Activities in a Room**” **Procedural Lesson** (directly below) so students understand the notion of “setting.”

PROCEDURAL LESSON

Activities in a Room

Overview: A group improvisation game with no words (using only their bodies) to help students understand the “what” (activity) and the “where” (location) of a scene or setting. One student chooses a room in a house and begins an activity that takes place in that room. When other students recognize the activity and the “type” of room, they may “enter” one at a time into the same room and perform a different activity there.

Time: 20 minutes

Instructional Procedures:

- Review **improvisation** rules and set-up and the elements of a scene.
- Have students stand in front of their chairs prepared to perform the activity together.

- c. Game rules to tell the students:
 - I'm going to call out the name of a room in the house.
 - When I say "action," show me (without any words or sounds—use only your body/actions) what you would do in that room of the house.
 - The first room is going to be the kitchen. *Think*—(don't move) what would you *do* in the kitchen? *ACTION*.
- d. Allow students time to act out their activity. Tell them two things:
 - Go slowly.
 - Keep your eyes on what *you're* doing.
- e. After you see everyone responding to these directions (fully participating) call *CUT*.
- f. Have students go back to their chairs and sit down.
- g. **Tell students:** "Notice that I said *go slowly*. You don't have real objects in your hands, so you need to go slower to give the audience a chance to see what you are doing. Also, keep your eyes on it. If you keep your eyes on the object that is *not really there*, and *see it with your imagination*, the audience will also see it."
- h. **Ask the students:** "What were you doing in the kitchen?" Call on a few students and ask them to give details—i.e. If someone was cooking ask, "What were you cooking? What did you use to mix it with? What ingredients did you use?" Explain to students that these details make their acting more like real life (*realistic*) and that's the way we want our acting to be because the audience needs to believe what you are doing on stage. This is just like when we use details in our writing to support our main idea, and give the reader a vivid picture of what we are trying to describe.
- i. **Start the game again** with *one volunteer* who will stand in the center of the circle.
- j. **Repeat** the instructions to the class:
 - Choose a room in the house, but don't tell anyone.
 - Then, choose an activity you would do in that room, but don't tell anyone.
 - When I say *ACTION*, start your activity.
 - When the audience knows where you are and what you are doing, one person at a time goes into the same room as you, but the must do a *different* activity in the same room.
 - Because you must be different from everyone, please raise your hand and wait to be called upon before entering the circle.
- k. Call *CUT* when there are no more volunteers left.
- l. Have students to return to their seats.
- m. Ask, "Where were you and what were you doing?" Call on a few students, but save the person who started for last.
- n. Before the last student says where they were, explain to the students that there are no wrong answers, because the rules of the game were to "go to the same room you *thought* the first person was in."

This is the end of the Activities in a Room activity.

4. In the same or different session, after you and your students have completed the "Character Circle" and/or "Activities in a Room" procedural lessons, **prepare students to serve as reviewers of the upcoming performance, workshop or residency.**

- a. Pass out the sheet titled "**How to Be a Kid Critic.**"
 - Explain that students will be writing a review of the upcoming arts engagement.
 - Using the handout, lead them in a discussion about writing a review, focusing particularly on some of the vocabulary that may be new to them. Discuss the drama vocabulary, e.g. character and setting, the procedural lessons demonstrated (see "Helpful Definitions" on pages 2-3 of this unit). Discuss examples of each,

referencing a recent story the class has read together. Explain to students that in their review, they will be expected to identify and describe the characters, setting and other dramatic elements (e.g., costumes, lighting, sound, if applicable) included in the arts experience.

- b. If the Arts Provider has provided reviews or other information, pass out copies and discuss them.
- c. Help students to distinguish between the different types of materials the provider has given you, e.g.:
 - Reviews/critiques are opinion pieces written by someone outside of the arts organization (and therefore may reflect either a positive or negative opinion about the performance);
 - Promotional materials are created by the arts organization and are intended be persuasive/to present the organization in a positive light.
 - Some materials are purely informational; they are facts presented without any opinion or attempt at persuasion.
- c. Just prior to the engagement, pas out the **“Kid Critic Observation Prompt”** (attached). Review the questions and explain that when they are at the arts experience, they should try to answer the questions in their heads.

DURING THE ENGAGEMENT

Instructions

- For an off-site performance, have students bring notebooks and copies of the “Kid Critic Observation Prompt” to the theater itself. Students may begin writing their impressions of the performance during intermission or on the bus back to school. Encourage students to write down adjectives, adverbs or any words that describe their observations or feelings, especially in regard to the questions asked in the observation prompt.
- For a school-site workshop or residency, have students record their impressions immediately following the sessions. Again, encourage students to write down adjectives, adverbs or any words that describe their observations or feelings, especially in regard to the questions asked in the observation prompt.

FOLLOWING THE ENGAGEMENT

Post-Engagement Class Activities

This session should occur as soon after the performance or workshop/residency as possible.

Instructions

1. Have students review their notes taken during the performance or workshop/residency. Have them add any additional thoughts or observations.
2. Pass out either the **“Theater Performance Writing Prompt”** or the **“Drama Residency/Workshop Writing Prompt”** to help students write a 3-5 paragraph review of the arts engagement in which they participated.
3. Pass out the **“Drama Review Checklist”** to assist them in their writing and editing process. Have them complete the checklist and turn them in with their completed review.
4. Upon completion of their reviews, you may choose to have students read them out loud.

Assessing Your Students’ Work

- Use students’ self-assessed checklists as well as the attached Ohio Department of Education Grade 3 Writing Scoring Rubric to assess students’ work.

How to Be a Kid Critic

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

What are the differences between a TV show or Movie and a LIVE performance?

How is the audience expected to behave during a live performance?

Where do live performances take place?

What do *you* look for in a live performance?

Set? Costumes? Lights? Special Effects? Music? Celebrities?

How can you tell if an audience is enjoying a performance or not?

What do you expect from the performers?

How can you tell a good performer from a bad one?

What is a "Review" or "Critique" of a show? What is a "Critic"?

Why do people read reviews of TV shows or Movies or Live Performances?

TOOLS the Writer uses to bring the story to life:

BEGINNING: Setting (WHERE and WHEN the story takes place), Characters (WHO are the people in the story), Conflict (WHAT is the problem in the story).

MIDDLE: Incidents (WHY events in the story lead to an UH-OH moment), Climax (UH-OH moment).

END: Resolution (HOW the story comes to an end).

TOOLS the Actor uses to bring the story to life:

Voice

Body

Brain



WRITING A NEWSPAPER REVIEW:

Newspapers and Magazines often print REVIEWS of performing art events. There are CRITICS who specialize in reviewing theatre, music and dance concerts. These critics write their opinion of the performance to give the possible audiences a fair, general idea of the production to help the audiences decide if they want to see the show or not. Reviews may give the reader the background of the play or company, themes, information on the author, composer, lyricist, choreographer, designers, actors, and any past performances. The review often gives the reader the critic's viewpoint of the set, lights, sound, costumes, and performance. Questions for the critic to address also include: was it entertaining, did the show catch and hold the audience's attention?

Critics often use the 5W's and 1H in their writing (who, what, when, where, why and how). A catchy headline and snappy lines from the show will add much to your review. They also discuss how the performance and its themes relate to every day life and the influence the performance could have on people today.

Keep in mind that even though the review is *your opinion*, you must give good reasons why you think as you do.

A snappy closing sentence or paragraph is a great way to end the review.



Kid Critic Observation Prompt

Student Instructions: While you are at the drama experience, try to answer the following questions in your head. When it is time for you to take notes, you will write your observations down and these notes will be the starting point for you to write your review.

1. Can you answer the “who, what, where, when and how” of the performance or workshop?



Who performed the play or taught the workshop? List the actors' names, the name of the theater company or any other information you collected about the people who did the performance or workshop.



If it was a play, **what** was the title and who was the author?



Where did the performance or workshops take place?



When did the performance/workshop take place? List the date and time.



Describe a little bit about **how** the play or workshop was organized?.

2. What did you think about it?



For a play, ask yourself, “Did I like/dislike: the story? the set design? the actors? the costumes?”



For a workshop, “Did I like/dislike: what they taught me? The experience of acting? How they taught me?”



What was your favorite part of the experience?



What was your least favorite part of the experience?



What facts did I observe that support my opinions/feelings?

Write down any other thoughts about the performance that you think will be helpful in writing your review.

Theater Performance Writing Prompt

- On (date) I saw (title of performance) at (name of theatre or school) . The play was about (main character) who (describe what the character wanted and how they went about getting it) .

(Are there other characters that are important to note? Do you have a copy of the program? Who wrote the play? Who directed it? What were the actors' names?)

- The setting was (describe) . OR The play took place in (describe) .

(Think about your senses: what did the set look like? Was it supposed to be indoors or outdoors? Could you tell what time period it was? What clues let you know where it was taking place? Were those visual clues [in the set or costumes] or were they textual clues [things the characters said]? Both? Did you like the set? Why? Would you have made the set differently?)

- The costumes were (describe) .

(Think about their color and texture. Did the costumes help you understand the characters better? What did the costumes tell you about each character? Did you like the costumes? Why? Would you have done the costumes differently? If there were no costumes, think about how the actor made you understand the character without any clues from a costume.)

- My favorite part of the performance was (list and then explain) .

(Make sure you support your opinion with examples from the performance.)

- I would recommend this performance to (name a friend or family member who you think would like to see this performance) because (explain why) .

(Think about what kind of audience this performance is best for: a little kid? A big kid? An adult? Girls? Boys? Both? Why is the performance better for a certain kind of audience or why is it appropriate for anybody? Or perhaps you wouldn't recommend the play. Why not? What would have made it better?)

Drama Residency/Workshop Writing Prompt

- On (date) (name of teaching artist) from (name of organization) came to my class to teach us _____.

(Were the activities he or she did similar or different from the Procedural Lessons you did previously with your classroom teacher? How were they different? How were they similar?)

- My favorite part of the experience was (explain) .

(Why? What details can you remember to support your opinion?)

- It would have been better if (describe) .

(Why? What details can you remember to support your opinion?)

- I will always remember (explain) .

(Why? Was it funny? Exciting? Something new for you?)

- I would recommend this experience for (name of friend or family member who you think would like to see this performance) because (explain why) .

(Think about what kind of participant this is best for: a little kid? A big kid? An adult? Girls? Boys? Both? Why is the workshop better for a certain kind of audience or why is the play appropriate for anybody? Or perhaps you wouldn't recommend the play. Why not? What would have made it better?)

Drama Review Checklist

DID YOU INCLUDE:	YES	NO
Title/Author of Story?		
Background of Story?		
Catchy Headline?		
INFORMATION ABOUT THE STORY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where & When the story takes place? • What the story is about? • Who are the characters? (their names, are they good or bad, silly, or smart, what they look like, what they do, how they act, etc.) • What is the theme of the story? • How the theme relates to today? • Is this a good theme? Why or why not? (Give at least 2 reasons.) • Any catchy lines from the story you liked or didn't? (Explain.) • Did you like the story? Why or why not? (Give at least 2 reasons for your opinion.) • Favorite and Least Favorite part of story and why? 		
INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of actor who performed the story? • What did the actor do to bring the story alive? (List at least 2 things or explain how the actor did NOT bring the story to life.) • Did you like or not like the actor's performance, why or why not? (Give at least 2 reasons.) 		
A beginning, middle, and end?		
Neat cursive handwriting?		
Correct capitalization?		
Correct punctuation?		
Good sentence and paragraph structure?		
Correct use of vocabulary?		
Correct use of nouns (<i>John, car, Cleveland...</i>), pronouns (<i>I, you, it, them, ours, she...</i>), verbs (<i>walk, run, cry...</i>), and adjectives (<i>blue, pretty, bright...</i>)?		
A recommendation who should or should not see this performance and why or why not?		
Snappy closing line?		
Proofreading, editing, and rewriting of the review?		
Giving the review to teacher?		

Grade 3 Writing Scoring Rubric

Score Point	Content Standards: Process 2 – 3, 11 Applications 2, 4	Organization Standards: Processes 2, 5, 6, 7	Conventions Standards: Conventions 1 – 6, 8 – 12, 14 – 17
4 Effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops a main idea or prompt completely supports a main idea with details from text focuses on a main idea with no extraneous information displays evidence of an author's voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains a clear message with a developed introduction, body and closure contains well-constructed paragraph(s) contains fluent and easy-to-follow complete sentences varies sentence structure and vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays legible handwriting displays correct use of nouns, verbs and adjectives displays correct agreement between subject and verb, noun and pronoun displays correct spelling of grade-level words and reasonable attempts at beyond-grade-level words displays correct capitalization and punctuation
3 Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops a mostly complete main idea or prompt supports a main idea with some details from text focuses on the main idea with little extraneous information displays some evidence of an author's voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys a clear message with a simple introduction, body and closure contains properly constructed paragraphs contains complete sentences that are somewhat fluent varies sentence structure and vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays legible handwriting in most cases displays mostly correct use of nouns, verbs and adjectives displays mostly correct agreement between subject and verb, noun and pronoun displays mostly correct spelling of grade-level words displays mostly correct capitalization and punctuation
2 Partial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops an incomplete main idea or prompt supports a main idea with a few details from text focuses on the main idea, but with some extraneous information does not display an author's voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains a somewhat confusing message with a simple introduction, body and closure; one or more may be missing contains one or more paragraphs contains mostly complete sentences that are difficult to follow and do not flow well varies sentence structure and vocabulary with some repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays legible handwriting some of the time displays partially correct use of nouns, verbs and adjectives displays partially correct agreement between subject and verb, noun and pronoun displays partially correct spelling of grade-level words displays partially correct use of capitalization and punctuation displays patterns of errors that sometimes impede meaning
1 Minimal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not develop a main idea or prompt includes few details, which do not support a main idea focuses on topic, but extraneous information impedes comprehension does not display an author's voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys a confused message without an introduction, a body or a closure contains little or no paragraph structure contains disjointed sentences with little relation between them uses repetitive sentence structure and vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays mostly illegible handwriting displays minimally correct use of nouns, verbs and adjectives displays minimal use of correct agreement between subject and verb, noun and pronoun displays minimal use of correct spelling displays minimal use of correct capitalization and punctuation contains patterns of errors that seriously interfere with meaning
0	Student attempts to respond, but response is off-topic, illegible, or insufficient or otherwise fails to meet requirements for a score of 1.		