

Playwriting the Scene & Heard Way

Teachers' Pack



SCENE & HEARD

Welcome

Who we are:

Established in 1999, Scene & Heard is a unique mentoring project. We partner the inner-city children of Somers Town in London with volunteer theatre professionals, enabling the children to write plays. We mentor small groups of children at a time, giving them focussed one-to-one adult attention during term-long courses. These courses are specifically designed to develop social, literacy and communication skills, to raise aspirations and to boost self-esteem. Professional actors volunteer their time to rehearse and perform the plays in high quality productions, giving the children a voice and a very public experience of success. Each child sits in the “Playwright’s Chair” during the four public performances of their play and takes a “playwright’s bow” alongside their professional actors. We are committed to remaining a presence in the children’s lives by offering them more than a one-off experience. We work with them through a series of courses over a number of years in order to have a profound and long-term impact.

The multi-faceted nature of our courses means they are very difficult for others to replicate in full. However, elements of our work are easily transferable. In particular, our unique playwriting method is accessible and can be taught and enjoyed beyond our walls. Whilst a school environment is very different from the one-to-one adult-to-child ratio that our children experience, the building blocks of our playwriting remain the same. Based on the work of Daniel Judah Sklar and the 52nd Street Project in New York, we have developed and honed our methods over many years.

Why we have created this pack:

This teaching resource has been created in direct response to requests from audience members and teachers, keen to find new ways of working with language, encourage creativity and develop literacy. It gives teachers a series of lesson plans to enable them to teach playwriting the Scene & Heard way.

The structure and format was developed through a range of consultations with primary school teachers and head teachers, Scene & Heard staff and our volunteer theatre professionals: actors, writers and directors. Staff we consulted felt that this pack is a perfect fit with the drive to improve written English.



Our playwriting technique:

Our children's plays are driven by character rather than plot. This gives the plays depth and truth as the children explore personality, mood and emotion. The children map out their characters' wants and fears, which helps to create engaging dramatic conflict. We steer them away from writing human characters in order to avoid a pedestrian TV soap style. Instead, they create characters from animals, objects and objects of nature, which liberates the imagination and opens up a world of creative thinking and writing. By avoiding human characters, children can explore themes and ideas that might otherwise be difficult for them to express.

How to use these lesson plans:

These lesson plans can be used as part of Literacy, Creative Writing and Drama. Aimed at Key Stage Two in particular, they could be adapted to be accessible to Key Stage One if required, for example, by reducing the individual exercises and focusing more on the group activities.

There are 10 lesson plans designed to be used an hour a day (potentially in 'literacy hour') for two weeks, or once a week over most of a term. The accompanying **example scripts/exercises** can simply be read aloud or acted out by either participants or staff. There is also plenty of scope within the format for it to be extended to fit teachers' individual needs. A set of further **Discussion Points** are provided for a more in-depth analysis (look out for the yellow markers along the way). This course can remain entirely classroom-based or it can be developed to create a full theatrical production, or indeed somewhere in between. The pack also has a broader range of uses across the curriculum (see the **What Next?** section towards the end).

We hope you enjoy this pack, Playwriting the Scene & Heard Way. If you do, please visit our website www.sceneandheard.org for more information, details of our productions and further resources. If you would like to give feedback on any aspect of this pack, please send your comments to mail@sceneandheard.org. We are a charity that works hard to raise the funds to provide a free service to the children of Somers Town. If you like this pack, please make a donation via our website.

Rosalind Paul

Artistic Director

Playwriting the Scene & Heard Way

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I.

IMAGINATION

INTRODUCTION – 10 mins

We are going to write a play. Discussion: 'What is a play?'

- Q What are the differences between film & TV and a play?
- Q What are the differences between a narrative story and a play?

Theatre is live and immediate. Plays in general are more about characters interacting with each other; what they say to each other and *how* they chose to say it, rather than hundreds of scenes, fast action and images. Plays are told through DIALOGUE rather than a narrator telling a story.

- Q Where do plays come from?
- the IMAGINATION
- Q Where does the imagination come from?
- us
There is no right or wrong when using our imagination, just like in our dreams, no idea is too crazy. Cats can be friends with toothbrushes and live on the moon, watering cans can want to be rappers, we just have to let our minds explore, it is our own idea from our own imagination.

We are going to write plays that have two characters interacting with each other.

Our first character is going to be based on an **ANIMAL**. Being creative and using our imaginations means that nothing is out of the realms of possibility, we needn't be limited by what that animal 'really' does or where it usually lives etc.

GROUP ACTIVITY – 20 mins

To develop a character and start the work for our plays we're going to create a **CHARACTER PROFILE**

Remember nothing is 'wrong' when using our imagination, the more creative the better. Our tiger might live in the jungle but wouldn't he be more interesting if he lived in Argos or worked for NASA?

DISCUSSION
POINT 1
([click here](#))

Handout:
CHARACTER
PROFILE FORM 1

As a class choose one animal that the majority is happy with. Try to avoid the obvious cats and dogs to find something more imaginative or unusual. If an 'ordinary' animal is chosen, find some detail to make it more interesting (e.g. an orange forest cat). Through discussion complete the **CHARACTER PROFILE** as a group;

- **NAME** – it could be simple, familiar, funny or complicated.
- **AGE** – how old is the animal? Is that 'young' or 'old' for that animal?
- **FAMILY** – discuss and decide details of the animal's family; who does it live with? Does it have parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, cousins? What are their names? Add in any important details about them. The more detail, the better.
- **HABITAT** – discuss what the word means. This is a general term and not necessarily limited to a house or the usual place the animal lives, i.e. an elephant might live in New York City or a cat could live on a hovercraft.
- **GREATEST WANT** – what the character wants most in the world. The bigger and stronger the WANT the better.
- **GREATEST FEAR** – what (or who) the character fears most in the world. This may be an obvious or an unusual fear.

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 20 mins

Having created a group character, the children can work individually to create their own **ANIMAL** character profile using those headings. Encouraging creativity, originality and using the **IMAGINATION**. (Discourage any reference to film and TV characters etc.)

PLENARY – 10 mins

Children can share with the group one or two interesting facts about their animal. In the next lesson we'll create another 'character' so that we can explore them interacting with each other in a scene.

Scene & Heard

Character profile I



Name

Age

Family

Habitat

Greatest Want

Greatest Fear

2.

CHARACTER

INTRODUCTION – 20 mins

Today we're going to create another character for our play. This one is going to be based on an **OBJECT**. Using our **IMAGINATIONS**, remember that nothing is out of the realm of possibility, we needn't be limited by what that object *really* does or where it lives etc. Discuss the kind of objects we might choose. Those in our bedroom or kitchen, in the leisure centre, the doctors' surgery or on a millionaires' private jet. Think of small and large objects: a grand piano, a paperclip, a bath, a strawberry or a mountain. They can be manmade or naturally occurring objects.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Ask the children to close their eyes and picture in their mind all the things in the classroom, small things and big things, soft things and hard things, man-made and natural (**NOT OTHER PEOPLE**). Ask them to pick one and then examine it in their mind – how does it feel? What is it made of? What colour is it? Does it have other 'friends' with it? Where does it live? What does it do all day? What does it do when the classroom is empty? If it could speak, what sort of a voice would it have? What would it say? Where would it like to go? What does it want most in the world?

Invite children one at a time to **HOT SEAT** their object. The child pretends that they are that object, and answers questions as though they are the character. Chair a Q & A session of questions for the character until the rest of the class can guess the object. Example questions: What are you made of? Do you have a function or job?

GROUP ACTIVITY - 10 mins

Now create a **CHARACTER PROFILE** for an object. Remember nothing is 'wrong' when using our imagination, the more creative the better. As a class, choose an object – it may be naturally occurring (raindrop, lemon, acorn) or manmade (spoon, boiled sweet, dining table).

Remember the categories from the last lesson and fill them in, as a class, for the object:

- **NAME**
- **AGE**
- **FAMILY**
- **HABITAT**
- **GREATEST WANT**
- **GREATEST FEAR**

Now introduce two extra categories for the profile:

MOST IMPORTANT BEING – the most important person or thing to the character (e.g. the most important being to a plant may be the sun, to a sofa it may be its mother the armchair or the Hoover).

JOB – doesn't have to be a job in the conventional sense, it is what they spend their day doing.

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 20 mins

Having created a group character, the children now work individually to create their own **OBJECT CHARACTER PROFILE** using those headings. Encouraging creativity, originality and using the **IMAGINATION**. (Discourage any reference to film and TV characters etc.) Look for the most imaginative objects, (perhaps veto Game boys, X-boxes and dolls).

PLENARY – 10 mins

Group discussion about how the elements of the character (outlined in the profile) would affect the way a character behaves; how they move and speak and most particularly what kind of words and phrases they might use. Next lesson we will start putting characters together to make drama.

Handout:
**CHARACTER
PROFILE FORM 2**

Scene & Heard

Character profile 2



Name

Age

Family

Habitat

Greatest Want

Greatest Fear

Most Important Being (the person or thing that means the most)

Job (what they spend their day doing)

3.

DRAMA

INTRODUCTION & GROUP EXERCISE – 20 mins

Today we're going to learn how to create drama.

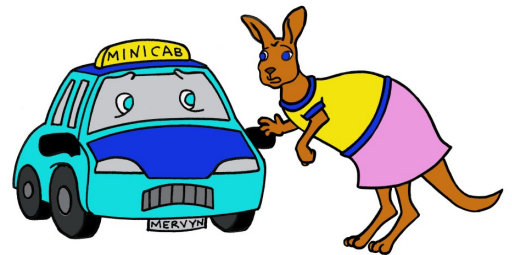
Discussion: what might happen when you put two characters together? What makes interesting drama?

⇒ **INVITE TWO CHILDREN TO READ ALOUD**

EXAMPLE PLAY 1 – *The Kangaroo & Minicab*

Stop after each of the three sections.

- Q Which version was the most interesting?
The third. (Not just because it was longer).



Why? Because the characters told each other, and therefore us, the audience, about themselves, their wants and fears. They wanted different things that lead them to engage in debate, there was some conflict and then they found a resolution to their problems.

⇒ **INVITE TWO OTHER CHILDREN TO READ ALOUD**

EXAMPLE PLAY 2 – *Sore Neck*

- Q What do the characters want?
Q What is causing the conflict?
Q What happens next?



Now let's continue the dialogue to explore how we can resolve (or not) the situation.

Layout of script – Use Example Play 2 (*Sore Neck*) to demonstrate how a script is laid out in the form of **DIALOGUE**, with characters talking to each other.

As a class write a continuation of this scene, with each character taking it in turns to speak. Avoid repetition, and going around in circles. Find a way to resolve the problem happily or sadly, but it must be resolved.

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 20 mins

Children can now work individually and write their own alternative end to the scene. The continuation must lead to some kind of conclusion: both characters get what they want, neither gets what they want, one does and the other doesn't get what they want...

GROUP WORK – 10 mins

In groups, pairs of children can read their scenes aloud to the rest of the group.

PLENARY – 10 mins

Today we learnt a bit about how to write a play. What was easy/difficult about writing an end to *Sore Neck*? How many different sorts of endings did we find? How many different ways are there of resolving the characters' problem?

Next lesson we'll start to write our own plays.

4.

BEGINNING OUR OWN PLAY

INTRODUCTION – 30 mins

Our plays are going to have two characters and are going to take place in one location.

Talk through the **SCRIPT FORMAT** on the page at the start of a play:

- **TIME** – when the play is taking place; past, present or future including: time of day, date or season. Whatever detail seems most interesting.
- **PLACE** – where the action is happening. Be specific; in a stock cupboard in the offices of Buckingham Palace, under a rock on the north side of the moon etc.
- **AT RISE** – (historically refers to what is happening as the curtain rises). What is happening at the very start? What is the first thing that the audience see or hear? For example, are both/either/neither characters on stage? What are they doing?

As a class, create some examples of setting together and then choose where and when to set the class play.

Recap the animal and object characters that were created collectively by the class in lessons 1 and 2. Talk about the two characters and where particular areas of contrast (and potential drama) might be, different wants and fears, e.g. an elephant wants to be a racing car driver, but the lipstick is scared of loud noises.

Handout:
SCRIPT FORMAT

DISCUSSION
POINT 2
([click here](#))

PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Talk about how each character might speak. Can we demonstrate different ways in which the characters might speak / express themselves, e.g. the elephant might have a squeaky voice, lipstick might speak in 'cool' street language.

Write a few lines of the play together, by inviting the group to respond to questions such as:

- Q Who's in the scene first, what are they doing?
- Q Do the characters know each other already or is this their first meeting?
- Q What do they think of each other when they first meet?
- Q Who speaks first, what do they say?
- Q How would the other character respond to that?

It is important to:

- Write in **DIALOGUE** with each character responding to what the other character says and does; imagine someone said this to you, how would you react? What would you say?
- Keep the scene moving forwards, do not go round and round in circles of dialogue saying the same things in different ways. Work for the progression and development of the scene.

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 20 mins

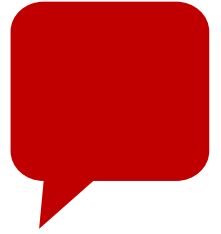
Each child can now choose two contrasting characters from the four created: two animals & two objects (one of each as a class and one of each individually). Begin by expanding the details on the character profiles; refining, editing, adding etc. Then choose a setting for the play: Time, place, at rise. Start writing the first couple of exchanges. Think about the characters (from the profiles) and how the place etc. makes them feel, is the setting one where one of the characters would feel 'at home' or neither of them would?

PLENARY – 10 mins

We have the beginning of a play. Only two characters and one setting, where can it go?... Anywhere. Using our IMAGINATION there are no restrictions on where the play can go, as long as the characters take the audience with them through DIALOGUE, through what they say.

Scene & Heard

Script format



TIME

...

PLACE

...

AT RISE

CHARACTER ONE

First line of dialogue

CHARACTER TWO

Second line of dialogue

INITIALS OR SHORTENED NAME FOR 1

Third line of dialogue

INITIALS OR SHORTENED NAME FOR 2

Fourth line of dialogue

(Any stage directions in brackets)

5.

CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION & GROUP DISCUSSION – 30 mins

What makes a scene interesting? **CONFLICT**.

Discuss:

Q **What is CONFLICT?**

Argument, debate, disagreement; it doesn't have to be violent or lead to a fight. It can simply be discussion with different points of view. It might be a clash between different aims, interests or ideas and can be driven by characters wants and fears.

Remind the children of the play *Sore Neck* and how the characters were presented with a problem that we had to find a solution to (Read it again if necessary). Recap some of the different resolutions to that **CONFLICT**. **CONFLICT** is important as it makes the drama interesting. Characters need to want different things and this in turn creates conflict.

⇒ **INVITE TWO GIRLS TO READ ALOUD**
EXAMPLE PLAY 3 – *Spanner & Hammer*

The purpose is to show how a lack of any kind of **CONFLICT** leads to a boring and uninteresting play. (Note - this is not about the acting, it's about the writing. We need to think like playwrights).

Characters who want to be friends: Spanner & Hammer both looking for a friend to help them be better at DIY. Discuss how uninteresting this was. Not only did the characters want the same thing, they were also very similar objects, which added to the lack of interest. The more different and varied the characters and their wants, the better.

DISCUSSION
POINT 3
([click here](#))

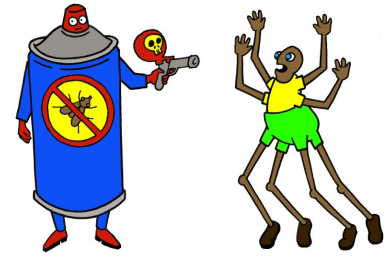


⇒ INVITE TWO BOYS TO READ ALOUD

EXAMPLE PLAY 4 – A Fruity Friendship

The purpose is to show how **CONFLICT** can lead to interesting and exciting drama.

Discuss this scene; the characters have different wants, what are they? How did that create conflict? Characters change as a result of drama, as a result of what happens to them and as a result of the people they meet. Once two characters meet there should be a change in the way each of them feels.



INDIVIDUAL WORK – 20 mins

Children continue writing their individual plays line by line through **DIALOGUE** - what the characters say to each other. Writing in **DIALOGUE** is different from writing a story. Imagine the stage and what the audience will see and hear. If a character does not say something, the audience will not know it. The writer needs to think in words and actions. Try not to use lots of stage directions (he looks sad) but rather get the characters to say how they are feeling or what they are thinking.

Don't worry about where the play is going at this stage, simply explore/express the characters wants and fears using the profiles as much as possible. Don't give characters what they want too easily as it is the process of getting there (or failing to) which makes an interesting play.

Ask questions:

- Q Why does a character react this way? What do they want or fear?
- Q How do the other character's actions make them feel?

PLENARY – 10 mins

In groups, share the plays with pairs reading aloud to the rest of the group. Offer feedback to each other; what is interesting or funny? Do the audience know what the characters want or feel? Do the audience know where the play is set?

6.

MOOD

INTRODUCTION – 30 mins

Today we're going to think about something that can affect the way a character behaves in a play – Mood.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Clear a small performance area with an audience space. Invite individual children to act out a simple transaction with you such as buying a cinema ticket or giving you directions to school. They must perform this *in the manner of the word* shown on a card. Can the rest of the group guess the word by seeing how they act?

Example words are: happily, secretively, angrily, sadly, enthusiastically, irritably, clumsily, carelessly, impatiently, excitedly, grumpily, hysterically, coolly, confusedly, speedily, daringly, lazily.

ALTERNATIVE EXERCISE

Invite individual children to mime a very ordinary action, e.g. brushing teeth or combing hair, silently but in the manner of the word. Can the class guess what the word is?

Discuss how the characteristics or moods that we give our characters will effect how they talk, walk, and react to situations. The way that a character reacts to a situation is what moves a scene forward. If characters have different moods and feelings from each other they will also speak & behave differently to each other. Their mood may change during the play as a result of meeting the other character or as a result of what happens to them.

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 15 mins

Continue writing individual plays remembering to think about the mood the characters are in at the beginning and how their mood progresses or even changes. Some further points:

Think about why characters do things and what they are feeling. Make sure that the audience know this too;

Set your play in *one* scene only, like our example scripts, they will be **SHORT PLAYS**;

We don't have to **SEE** everything on stage - events can be referred to, characters can tell us things that have happened or are going to happen. Time can pass. News or information can come via a phone call, text or letter;

Third characters are not allowed.

SHARING – 10 mins

Pairs of children can read aloud to other pairs. When listening to a play, remember that you are the audience - if there are things you don't understand, or things you would like to know more about tell the playwright so that they can put it into their play next week.

PLENARY – 5 mins

Think about where you would like your play to go next week. Are there any ideas or sections that need more explanation, or even less? Have you included the best bits from the Character Profiles?

7.

AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT

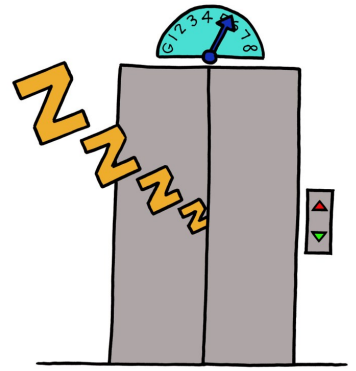
INTRODUCTION & GROUP EXERCISE – 30 mins

We have talked a lot about CONFLICT. However, it is also important when people do eventually AGREE. If characters go on disagreeing the progress of the drama gets stuck or is 'blocked'.

⇒ **INVITE A GIRL AND A BOY TO READ ALOUD**
EXAMPLE PLAY 5 – *Penny and Norman*

The play has three versions. Read each one, starting back at the beginning each time. Leave the discussion until all three versions have been read.

- Q What is good/bad about each version?
- Q Which version is the most interesting? Why? (not because of length)



PRACTICAL EXERCISE

In pairs, one person be A and one B, discuss planning to go on a picnic. Take turns to suggest things you could do or things you might bring to the picnic.

VERSION 1: Reject every idea your partner comes up with. The dialogue may go something like this...

A: I'm going to bring a bottle of Coke.

B: Yeeeeuck!!! I hate Coke. It tastes disgusting. I'm bringing orange juice.

A: Don't be silly, it's going to be hot, juice will go off and all fizzy and make you sick. I'm going to make cheese sandwiches.

B: Have you forgotten? Cheese makes me go all spotty and brings me out in a rash.

Note: It's not enough to say "No thanks..." it needs to be enthusiastically rejected!

VERSION 2: Start again, this time, accepts every suggestion your partner makes, but without enthusiasm...

A: I'm going to bring sausage rolls.

B: Well I don't like them but yeah that's fine. I'm going to bring a Frisbee.

A: I'm no good at Frisbee so I won't be playing but someone might like it...

VERSION 3: Start again, this time greet every idea as though it's the best idea anyone's ever had and you can't wait to try it!

A: I'm going to bring a bottle of lemonade.

B: Yes! And I'm going to bring some champagne glasses to drink it from so we can pretend we're rich!

B: Yes! And I'll bring some of those little umbrellas to put in the glasses...

Discuss what was interesting in the three versions. Which was easier to play? How does accepting or rejecting ideas affect the drama? If characters keep saying no to the ideas then the drama gets stuck and can't move forward.

DISCUSSION
POINT 4
([click here](#))

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 15 mins

Write some more dialogue in your plays and try to move the story/drama forward by allowing characters to accept the ideas.

SHARING – 10 mins

Ask pairs to read their plays to each other. Be an audience for each other and give each other feedback - what bits were good / interesting?

PLENARY – 5 mins

Have a think about where your play might be going and how you would like your play to end and we will look at this next time.

8.

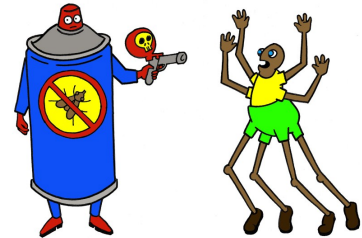
ENDINGS

INTRODUCTION – 20 mins

⇒ **INVITE TWO BOYS TO REREAD ALOUD**
EXAMPLE PLAY 4 – *A Fruity Friendship* (also used in Lesson 5)

Discussion:

- Q What do we think of that ending?
- Q Is it the end of the play or could it lead to another scene?
- Q How could the play/scene have ended differently?



A play can end happily or sadly, for one or other or both characters. It isn't always necessary to tie everything up at the end of a play.

You may decide to have a 'cliff-hanger' ending, leaving the audience wondering what is going to happen next.

You may decide to have a 'twist in the tale', where things are not what they at first seemed to be, perhaps a trick or a double cross.

Ways to end your play:

- Both characters get what they want.
- One character gets what they want and the other doesn't.
- Neither character gets what they want.
- They discover it wasn't what they wanted after all.

DISCUSSION
POINT 5
([click here](#))

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 15 mins

Return to writing your play and find a way to end it.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Create a title page for your play. It should have the title and the name of the playwright and then (if there is time) a large, colourful picture of the characters underneath.

SHARING – 15 mins

Pairs read aloud their plays to other pairs (four plays read in all).

PLENARY – 10 mins

For every one of you there is a different ending. The ending affects what your audience feel. Will your audience be happy or sad? Surprised or delighted? Inspired or amazed? What other ways could you make an audience feel?

Next time we will re-visit our plays for some fine tuning.

9.

EDITING & IMPROVING

INTRODUCTION – 20 mins

The plays are brilliant. Today we are going to spend a bit of time making them even more brilliant, by adding a bit of detail and by **EDITING**.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE

In pairs. One person tells a story (it can be anything – a made up story, Cinderella, how they got to school today). Whenever they feel like it the listener says “Colour it!” and the storyteller has to go into more detail about the thing they’ve just mentioned. It might go something like this...

A: One day a little boy woke up and looked out of his window.

B: Colour it!

A: The window was old and rotten and the glass was cracked. He looked out and saw his garden.

B: Colour it!

A: The garden was beautiful and sunny and the grass was green.

B: Colour it!

A: It was the brightest, shiniest green you ever saw! But the boy felt sad.

B: Colour it!

A: He felt as sad as he had when his pet goldfish died...

Swap over so that everyone has a go at colouring the story.

INDIVIDUAL WORK – 20 mins

Go back to your play and improve it by adding detail and colour. This is your chance to change anything, to improve your play and to make clearer anything that doesn't quite make sense. Look back at your Character Profiles and check that you've included all the interesting bits of information somewhere in the dialogue. Remember, the audience will not see your Character Profiles, so anything you want them to know must be in the dialogue. The plays should **not be more than a few minutes long**. Cut out any repetition or bits that seem to go off at a tangent and don't move the action forward.

SHARING – 15 mins

In groups, read each other's plays. Start to cast the plays, who is the right casting for a particular part? Try and find the right actor for the right role.

PLENARY – 5 mins

Next we will put the plays on their feet and really start acting. Think about your characters and how they might walk or talk. In what ways are they different from you?

Make type-scripts or photocopies of for the next lesson.

10.

PERFORMING & CELEBRATING!

INTRODUCTION & PAIRS WORK – 15 mins

Today we're going to have fun performing our brilliant plays!

You will need extra copies of the plays so that the children can work in pairs, each reading from their own copy of the script. Practice reading the plays out loud and acting them out. Practice nice loud, clear voices, perhaps incorporating character voices (i.e. ways of speaking other than your own) or accents. Characters may also move in a particular way (i.e. a style of movement that suits that animal/object).

SHARING – 30 mins

This can be as formal or informal as you like.

Make it special by inviting people into class to share the plays. The plays could be part of an assembly.

DISCUSSION POINTS – 10 mins

Discuss what makes interesting drama. What was easy or difficult about writing these plays? Did having Character Profiles help to make a more interesting drama? Discuss how many different sorts of plays you have created - different sorts of plot lines and stories as well as the range of endings. Could any of the plays be the first scene in a longer play? Where could they go?

PLENARY– 5 mins

Celebrate the brilliance!

Package the plays up for them to keep with the title page on the front, the play pages in the middle and the Character Profiles at the back.

This can be the end of the project or it can be taken into a more public production. See What Next? on pages 55-56 for further ideas.

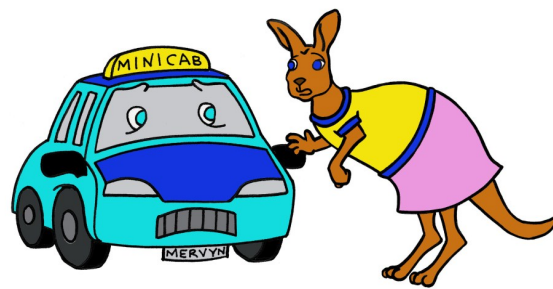


SCENE&HEARD

Example Play 1:

THE KANGAROO AND THE MINI-CAB

(Used in Lesson 3)



CHARACTERS:

Diana – a Kangaroo

Mervyn – a Mini-cab

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Kangaroo & Mini-cab

(NB. All three versions start at the top. Version 1 ends at the first line, version 2 at the second line and version 3 at the end).

DIANA

Excuse me, can you give me a lift please?

MERVYN

No, not really.

(Version one – he exits)

(Diana jumps in front of him)

MERVYN

Hey, get out of my way, lady roo!

DIANA

Aren't you a mini cab?

MERVYN

Yes, but.....

DIANA

Well, I don't see any passengers – don't you want a customer?

MERVYN

Look, I'd like to stop, but I'm on my way to my mini cab exam. Sorry.

(Version two – he exits)

DIANA

Oh, so you're not fully qualified then?

MERVYN

Well, no, but I've still got all my wheels and I can get people from A to B. It's hard you know, they make you take these tests and it's all about theory – experience means nothing these days. You've got to know all the short cuts.

DIANA

Look, please can you take me to the airport. I'll pay - I'll tell you the way – anything, but I really need to get there!

MERVYN

No, sorry, it's out of my way. I can't help. Now please MOVE!!!

(**Diana** jumps into the minicab seat)

MERVYN

Hey, what do you think you're doing? You're messing up my nice leather interior – get out!!

(**Diana** burst into tears)

Oh, here we go! Waterworks!

DIANA

(weeping) It's my mother – she's sick – I've got to get on the next plane to Sydney – or else, or else.....

MERVYN

The “my mother's dying” sob story thing won't work with me. I'm asking you politely once again – please get out of me, or I shall call the police.

DIANA

(sobbing) But it's true! She's really sick – it may be my last chance to see her. I left Australia five years ago and the last thing my mother said to me was, “You'll be back – kangaroos have tried to make it big in Europe before and never succeeded. What makes you think you're different?” I told her she was wrong and stupid and that I'd show her.

I need to go back and make my peace before it's too late.

MERVYN

(to audience) I'm a sucker for a lady in distress!

OK. I'll do it. M4 here we come.

DIANA

M4? Don't you know the short cut?

MERVYN

Oh my word, not another one that I don't know.

DIANA

Come on, I'll teach you. I can tell you a few others while we drive if you like.

(Diana gets in the mini-cab)

MERVYN

OK – it's a deal. You don't know a short cut from Somers Town to Peckham do you?

DIANA

On yeah – that's easy.....



SCENE&HEARD

Example Play 2:

SORE NECK

(Used in Lesson 3)



CHARACTERS:

Pauline - a shop assistant

Graham - a giraffe

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Time

The present. A cold October afternoon at 5.25pm.

Place

A clothes shop.

At Rise

Pauline, the shop assistant is cashing up the till.
Graham, the giraffe enters sniffing and coughing.

PAULINE

Oh, I'm sorry – we're closing.....

GRAHAM

Yes, but you're not closed yet are you?

PAULINE

Er, no, not exactly, but.....

GRAHAM

Good (he walks towards her). Right then. I need a scarf.

PAULINE

Oh, I'm sorry – we don't have any.

GRAHAM

No scarves? But the sign outside says “suppliers of outdoor wear”. I can see gloves over there and hats right here. You must have scarves.

PAULINE

Well you see the thing is, um..... we just don't have any right now.

GRAHAM

Well that's absurd. I've got the most terrible laryngitis and if I don't get my neck wrapped up nice and warm soon, it's going to get a whole lot worse.

PAULINE

Why don't you just go home to bed – have a hot lemony drink.

GRAHAM

If only! I've got to be at a football match in half an hour. Not just any match either, in case you think I'm some kind of fanatic who doesn't know when it's best to give up, go home and get some rest – no, it's my team.

PAULINE

That's what you guys always say: "my team". You can miss one match surely? (she begins to cash up the till again)

GRAHAM

No, no, you don't understand. I'm the team manager. I have to be there. It's my job. Now come on. Where are you hiding the scarves? I know your tricks. Just because you don't want to serve me.....

PAULINE

Look to be honest, they're out the back. They only arrived this morning and I'm not authorised to open them.

GRAHAM

Not authorised?

PAULINE

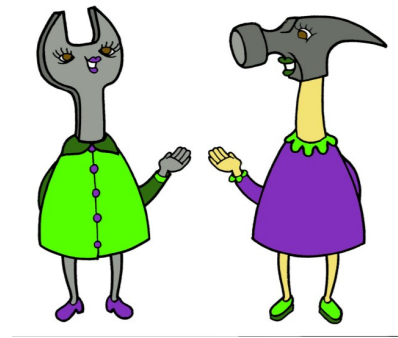
I'm sorry, but it's more than my job's worth. I'm not authorised to open new stock and I have to close the shop at 5.30pm on the dot. It's now 5.28! So, I'm sorry, you'll have to go somewhere else.



SCENE&HEARD

Example Play 3:

SPANNER AND HAMMER



(Used in Lesson 5)

CHARACTERS:

Sally – a Spanner

Harriet – a Hammer

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(Sally enters)

SALLY

(sighs) It's so hard being on my own...

(Harriet enters)

HARRIET

Oh, hello, who are you?

SALLY

I'm Sally, the spanner.

HARRIET

Good to meet you. I'm Harriet the hammer.

(They shake hands)

What are you doing?

SALLY

Oh, just hanging around...hoping I might be of some use.

HARRIET

I know what you mean. It's frustrating not being used isn't it?

SALLY

Too right! Here I am, a fine specimen of a spanner – all shiny and ready to go. I just need a friend to help me.

HARRIET

But that's amazing! I'm looking for a friend too. A hammer is no good on his own. All I want to do is what I was made to do – DIY. I wish it was Sunday every day!

SALLY

Me too! I'm never happier than when I'm tightening a nut.

HARRIET

Hey, how about we go into business together? Two heads are better than one and with you to help me, I just know I'll be able to fulfil my dream.

SALLY

I'm so glad you came by. I've been waiting ages for someone to be my friend. Let's go and find a nice place in need of modernisation and work on it together.

HARRIET

Ok my friend – let's go!

(They exit together)



SCENE&HEARD

Example Play 4:

A FRUITY FRIENDSHIP

By Kate Coleman

(Used in Lesson 5 and Lesson 8)



CHARACTERS:

Spider

Exterminator

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TIME

3.30pm Friday afternoon on a hot summer day, 2003

PLACE

A scruffy flat on the 7th floor of a block of flats. Piles of cardigans everywhere – on the floor, on the bed. The curtains are closed and the room is dreary. There is a huge web in one corner.

AT RISE

A spider is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room spinning with his legs. He gets up looks out the window, sighs and then goes back to his chair and starts spinning again. There is a loud knock on the door and the door immediately flies open. An insect exterminator stands in the doorway, gun at the ready.

EXTERMINATOR

Ah ha! So there are spiders here! Time to exterminate! Time to meet your fate, mate!

SPIDER

Get away from me! You're evil!

(Exterminator jumps at Spider pointing his gun)

Killer!

EXTERMINATOR

That's right – here to kill you!

(Takes a shot. The spider ducks.)

EXT.

I'm the quickest in the business!

(Takes a shot at one of the spider's legs)

SPIDER

Ow! The cruellest in the business more like!

(Ext. takes another shot. The spider falls to his knees.)

AAAA! Please don't ... don't kill me!

(Ext. stands over the spider)

EXT.

I have to.

SPIDER

Why?

EXT.

It's my job.

SPIDER

What?

EXT.

It's my job. I'm an exterminator. I have to exterminate.

(Points gun at spider)

SPIDER

No.. wait.. you don't have to exterminate.

EXT.

Of course I do. If I don't exterminate I won't get paid and if I don't get paid I can't feed my family. And it's a big family.

SPIDER

Tell me about it! I've got 37 children and each one hungrier than the last.

EXTERMINATOR

Oh no! Have I got to commit 37 more murders after you?

SPIDER

I thought you liked exterminating?

EXT.

I don't like it. I just do it. To earn my living.

SPIDER

Well, I don't like what I'm doing either.

EXT.

What's that?

SPIDER

I spin cardigans... for tourists. My boss is really mean. I'm the fastest spinner but he only pays me 2p an hour.

EXT.

2p an hour - that's outrageous!

SPIDER

I have to work so hard just to be able to feed myself let alone do anything else. Sometimes I go to bed crying my legs are so sore.

EXT.

Tell me about it. The blast from this gun makes my fingers bleed.
Look.

(Puts down the gun and shows Spider his hands.)

SPIDER

Just the thought of another day like this makes me cry.

EXT.

Can't you get your 37 children to help you?

SPIDER

Ha! They're not here. They're back in Spiderland with my wife.

EXT.

Spiderland?

SPIDER

Near Africa.

EXT.

Ah. You must really miss them. I don't know how I'd get through the day if I didn't have my kids to come home to...

(Gets out a photo from his wallet)

Here... these are my youngest... and this is my wife...

SPIDER

She's very pretty ... nice smile... I'm spinning extra hard at the moment...

(Indicates the piles of cardigans)

So that I can go home for my wife's birthday.

EXT.

Oh no! Now I'm really depressed.

SPIDER

Why? At least you're with your wife.

EXT.

No, I'm depressed because you seem like a really nice spider but I've still got to kill you.

SPIDER

What?!

EXT.

I still have to do my job... I have no choice.

(Turns sadly and picks up his gun. The spider jumps on his back.)

Get off! What are you doing?

SPIDER

Using my spider poison.

EXT.

Noooo!

SPIDER

Oh yes! It's my turn to exterminate!

EXT.

You're crazy!

SPIDER

You leave me no choice. I can't just stand back and let you kill me. A spider's got to do what a spider's got to do!

(Takes elaborate killing position)

EXT.

You're scaring me!

SPIDER

I don't want to, it's just .. well... I don't want to die.

EXT.

Well... nor do I!

SPIDER

Well you don't have to.

EXT.

What?

SPIDER

And nor do I. We both deserve to live. Neither of us have done anything bad... yet. You're a good man and I'm a good spider.

EXT.

Oh – it's so unfair. But I'll get in real trouble if I don't clean this place up.

SPIDER

Well, I don't want you to get in trouble...

EXT.

Oh so you won't mind if I...

(Indicates gun)

SPIDER

Don't be stupid! I'm not talking death – I'm talking alternatives... so think of some!

EXT.

Okay... okay...

(They both pace up and down)

(LESSON FIVE STOP HERE)

(LESSON EIGHT CONTINUATION)

EXT.

I know, I know! Couldn't you just leave this block of flats? Then my boss would think I'd done my job and you'd still be alive.

SPIDER

But, where would I go?

EXT.

Home to your wife.

SPIDER

I wish! But like I said I've got no money – otherwise I'd have been there yesterday.

EXT.

Hmmm – that is tricky – but there has to be a way to get you there.

SPIDER

If only there was. I'd be the happiest spider alive!

EXT.

Hang on – I think I've got an idea.

SPIDER

Well – what?

EXT.

I'm not sure it'll work. My ideas aren't always very good...

SPIDER

What? What?

EXT.

Well...

SPIDER

Yes???

EXT.

I know that there's a boat that delivers bananas to Africa once a week...

SPIDER

Yes, and ...?

EXT.

And it leaves tomorrow. From the North Quay.

SPIDER

So.. I'd still need money. And there's a limit to how many cardigans I can spin before then.

EXT.

No need for money. We'll smuggle you abroad. Hide amongst the bananas and bingo! You're homeward bound!

SPIDER

Brilliant! Spiderland here I come! But won't the boat's captain notice me?

EXT.

No – we'll paint you yellow.

SPIDER

Yeah – and I'll act really cool like bananas do

(Adopts a cool pose)

“Hey fruit – how's it hanging?”

(They both laugh)

I can't believe it – I'm going home! You're brilliant!

EXT.

Really?

SPIDER

Yeah, really.

I'd never have thought of such a great plan. I'd probably have sat here spinning for the rest of my life and never have seen my family again.

EXT.

Well, thank you – no-one's ever called me brilliant before.

SPIDER

Well, what do they call you?

EXT.

Bob.

SPIDER

Well, Bob – thanks.

(They shake hands)

You're a life saver.

EXT.

You're welcome, ... ?

SPIDER

Crispin.

EXT.

You're welcome Crispin. Makes a change from being a killer. Feels better too! In fact I can't remember when I felt this good!

SPIDER

Me neither.

EXT.

What a day – but come on – there's no time to lose!

SPIDER

Okay! Okay!

EXT.

You pack up your stuff – keep it light. And I'll go and buy some yellow paint.

SPIDER

Please make sure it's spider-friendly paint. I don't want to end up stiff as a board.

EXT.

Good idea – it would be awful if someone really did think you were a banana and ate you.

SPIDER

That would be a nasty surprise!

BOTH (together)

For them!!

(They both laugh)

EXT.

So – I’ll meet you at the North Quay at 9 o’clock tomorrow morning?

SPIDER

Okay – and if I see your boss I’ll act dead!

EXT.

Good idea! See you tomorrow – don’t be late!

SPIDER

I won’t! Good luck.

(The exterminator exits. The Spider jumps for joy!)

SPIDER

I’m going home! I’m going home! Spidey’s going home!

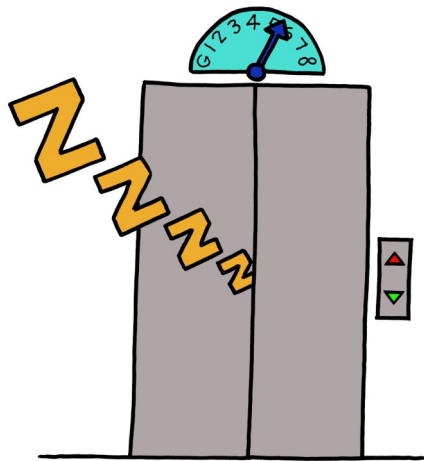
END



SCENE&HEARD

Example Play 5:

PENNY AND NORMAN



(Used in Lesson 7)

CHARACTERS:

Norman

Penny

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[VERSION 1: In which Norman suggests an idea – Penny blocks & goes to sleep]

TIME

11.38am

PLACE

In the lift at the offices of BHSC Bank

AT RISE

Penny is standing in the lift. Norman runs in just as the doors are closing.

NORMAN

Phew! That was close!

PENNY

Obviously your lucky day!

(They stand in silence, as the lift starts moving upwards. Suddenly it jolts to a stop.)

NORMAN

Oh my word, what was that?

PENNY

Oh no – it's stopped.

NORMAN

We're trapped!

(He starts panting and loosening his tie)

PENNY

Calm down – someone'll come soon.

(She pushes the alarm bell)

NORMAN

But we should do something! The oxygen could run out...we might die...

PENNY

Stop panicking.

NORMAN

Let's try and attract some attention. Help me to bang on the door.

PENNY

Stop over-reacting. I've pushed the alarm bell. Just relax.
(She sits down)

NORMAN

What are you doing?

PENNY

I'm just going to have 40 winks until the firemen get here.

(She goes to sleep. Norman just stands there nervously looking around him.)

*[VERSION 2: In which both characters suggest and block the other.
Time, Place, At rise as before]*

NORMAN

Phew! That was close!

PENNY

Obviously your lucky day!

(They stand in silence, as the lift starts moving upwards. Suddenly it jolts to a stop.)

NORMAN

Oh my word, what was that?

PENNY

Oh no – it's stopped.

NORMAN

We're trapped!

(He starts panting and loosening his tie)

Quickly, help me bang on the doors!

PENNY

Don't be ridiculous! Calm down! All we need to do is press the alarm bell.

(She does so!)

NORMAN

Those things are always broken! Oh my word we're going to die!

PENNY

Look there's a vent in the roof. Give me a hand up and I'll see if we can open it up.

NORMAN

Don't be ridiculous you'll break your leg. Let's use my umbrella to see if we can force the doors open.

PENNY

Your puny umbrella is hardly likely to open two steel doors!

NORMAN

Okay! Okay! At least I was trying to help.

PENNY

Well help me get up to the vent.

NORMAN

No! I think the doors are the answer. I just need to think of a way of prising them apart...

PENNY

We'll be stuck between floors. The only answer is the vent!

NORMAN

I think we'd be better off shouting!

PENNY

And who exactly do you think is going to hear you?

NORMAN

(Starts shouting)

Help! Help!

(Penny blocks her ears while still looking up at the vent)

[VERSION 3: in which both characters suggest and accept ideas to get out. Time, Place, At rise as before.]

NORMAN

Phew! That was close!

PENNY

Obviously your lucky day!

(They stand in silence, as the lift starts moving upwards. Suddenly it jolts to a stop.)

NORMAN

Oh my word, what was that?

PENNY

Oh no – it's stopped.

NORMAN

We're trapped!

(He starts panting and loosening his tie)

Quickly help me bang on the doors!

PENNY

Don't be ridiculous! Calm down! All we need to do is press the alarm bell.

(She does so!)

NORMAN

Those things are always broken! Oh my word we're going to die!

PENNY

Look there's a vent in the roof. If only we could reach it! It's quite high though.

NORMAN

No, no you're right. I could give you a hand up. It's not that far.

PENNY

Are you sure? I don't want to hurt you.

NORMAN

Desperate times call for desperate measures!
I'm Norman, by the way.

(They shake hands)

PENNY

Penny.
Okay, here goes – kneel down and brace yourself.

(Penny climbs up and reaches for the vent)

I think...I've...I've...got it!

NORMAN

Brilliant! What can you see?

(Penny jumps down to join Norman)

PENNY

There's a ladder attached to the wall above the lift. We could climb
up to the next floor.

NORMAN

(Nervously)
Okay...okay...

PENNY

What's wrong?

NORMAN

Er...nothing...it's just...

PENNY

Just what?!

NORMAN

Well I'm really scared of ladders.

PENNY

Scared of ladders? I've never heard of such a thing.

NORMAN

Well it's not the ladders, it's looking down at the ground when I'm climbing them.

PENNY

You're not scared of ladders – you're scared of heights!

NORMAN

I'm really sorry. I feel such a fool.

PENNY

No need for that – I've got an idea. What if we use your tie to blindfold you? Then you'll be able to climb the ladder but you won't be able to see the ground!

NORMAN

You're a genius

PENNY

I'll be right behind you and I'll let you know when we get to the next floor.

NORMAN

Let's give it a go!

DISCUSSION POINTS

Click on the lesson number to return

DISCUSSION POINT 1 (Lesson 1. Imagination)

Different genres: film, TV, fiction, stories, plays. How do we recognise the different genres? What are the differences in setting? Number of characters? Ways in which themes are communicated to the audience? What are the differences from the point of view of an audience (watching from at home on the sofa, in a dark cinema, in a live theatre)?

DISCUSSION POINT 2 (Lesson 4. Beginning Our Own Play)

Settings. Explore further the possibilities of settings and characters. What happens if we put extraordinary characters in a very ordinary setting? Can we think of any examples of this on TV or film (e.g. Dr Who)? What happens if we put ordinary characters in an unusual or extraordinary setting (e.g. Alice in Wonderland)? In film and TV the setting is clear, but how do the audience of a play without lots of scenery know where it is set?

DISCUSSION POINT 3 (Lesson 5. Conflict)

Explore further the different types of conflict, from the simplest minor disagreement between two people to the extremes of a war between peoples or a global crisis. What are the different stages of conflict from one to the other? How do people diffuse a conflict, in order to stop it escalating to the next stage?

DISCUSSION POINT 4 (Lesson 7. Agreement & Disagreement)

How easy or difficult is it to move dialogue forward and stop going 'around in circles'? What techniques do we use in our own lives when we talk to each other, in order to break out of a pattern and introduce new ideas? As playwrights, we can make our characters move the story forward by giving them ways to resolve the conflict: e.g. people 'agree to disagree'; offer a compromise; are persuaded to change their mind; crack a joke to break the tension. Can you think of other ways?

DISCUSSION POINT 5 (Lesson 8. Endings)

Discuss examples of films or books that have a range of endings. How many different sorts of endings to a story can we think of? How do endings affect how we feel about the story as a whole? Some films or books are part of series (e.g. Harry Potter), but each one has its own end. How does this work and what are the advantages or disadvantages?

WHAT NEXT?

These Lesson Plans can stand alone as a Literacy resource. However, they can be used as the starting point for a move towards **drama and performance**. In addition, a number of elements of the Lesson Plans can be easily adapted to support **learning across the curriculum**, offering children a new way of working with literacy and language.

DRAMA - PRODUCING THE PLAYS

You could have a **REHEARSED READING** (with scripts in hand, either seated or standing on a stage) for an invited audience.

Plays could be **RECORDED** in the style of a **RADIO PLAY** or **FILM**.

A full **THEATRICAL PRODUCTION** could include:

SOUND EFFECTS, which can be made formally and recorded for performance. Alternatively actors can 'perform' sound effects for each others' plays live.

COSTUMES can be made or brought in from home. Someone can be allocated the role of Costume Designer.

PROPS can be made or sourced from outside of school, with a designated Prop Master. Alternatively, props can be mimed.

SET can be as simple as a couple of chairs, or a more elaborate backdrop (painted or projected) can be created.

PUBLICITY Children could design flyers and programmes for the production. They could make and sell tickets for the performance.

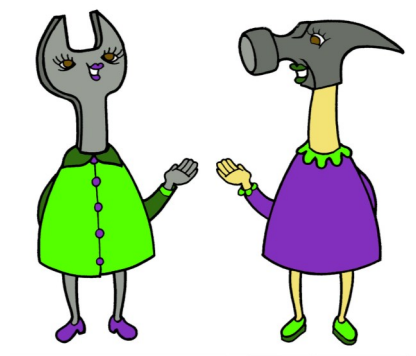
WAYS TO USE THIS PACK ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

The **CHARACTER PROFILE** forms can be used as an analytical tool in a range of subjects.

- ⇒ **HISTORY** - Create a Character Profile for a historical figure, e.g. what was Queen Victoria's Greatest Want/Fear? How does this biographical investigation help us to understand her actions better?
- ⇒ **LITERATURE** - Create a Character Profile for a fictional character in a book that you are reading in class or at home.
- ⇒ **THE WORLD TODAY** - Create a Character Profile for a famous person, e.g. the Prime Minister, the President of the USA, a footballer, a pop star, a scientist.

Use the **HOT SEATING EXERCISE** from Lesson 2. Character.

Once the children have created Character Profiles for an historical, fictional or current person, children can take on those characteristics and 'play' the person for the class to ask questions. This can give an insight into people or characters that can make them much more accessible and interesting.



EVALUATION & FURTHER SUPPORT

We value your feedback. Please take a moment to send us your comments on any aspect of this Teachers' Pack:

mail@sceneandheard.org

Would you be interested in purchasing a DVD to accompany this pack, with demonstration plays performed by professional actors?

Would you or your school be interested in INSET training by a Scene & Heard Course Leader?

If so, please contact us on the above email address.

Scene & Heard produces four public performances a year in Somers Town, London. See our website www.sceneandheard.org for a diary of forthcoming events.

We are a charity that works hard to raise the funds to provide a free service to the children of Somers Town. If you like this pack, please make a donation via our website.

Playwriting the Scene & Heard Way

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