

## **Creative Classroom – Juicy Verbs and *The Giving Tree* Lesson Plan**

*\*this lesson plan is written for two teachers, but could easily be modified into two groups for one teacher, or one small group\**

Grade 1

Approximate instruction time: 1 hour

### **Standards Fulfilled by this Lesson based on the National Standards for Theatre Education Grades K-4:**

- **Content Standard #2:** *Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations*
  - a) Students imagine and clearly describe characters, their relationships, and their environments
  - b) Students use variations of locomotor and nonlocomotor movement and vocal pitch, tempo, and tone for different characters
  - c) Students assume roles that exhibit concentration and contribute to the action of classroom dramatizations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.
- **Content Standard #3:** *Designing by visualizing and arranging environments for classroom dramatizations*
  - a) Students visualize environments and construct designs to communicate locale and mood using visual elements (such as space, color, line, shape, texture) and aural aspects using a variety of sound sources
  - b) Students collaborate to establish playing spaces for classroom dramatizations and to select and safely organize available materials that suggest scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costumes, and makeup.

### **Objectives:**

The Learner Will learn and explore verbs.

TLW identify verbs in a story as presented to them.

TLW be introduced to the standard plot diagram and fit it to Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*.

TLW work with other students to act out a story.

### **Materials:**

- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- Small percussion instruments
- Various pieces of fabric – greens and other natural colors are best

### **Set-Up:**

- This lesson is designed to be done in a typical first grade classroom. It is helpful to have floor space for reading the story aloud and for performance, but most classrooms can be modified to work!

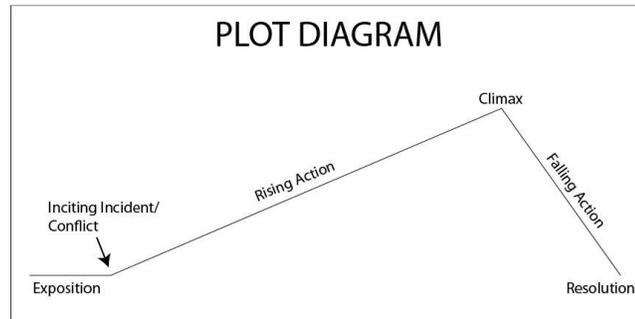


### **Introduction/Warm-Up:**

- Students should stand with enough space between them to move without touching another student. A circle is helpful, but not necessary depending on classroom space.
- Introduce that we will warm-up the three tools an actor has – body, voice, and imagination!
  - Body: Everyone stretch up and reach as high as possible, then flop over – do this 3 times, reaching higher each time (flat footed, on tip toes, etc.)
  - Voice: Start moving your face around without sounds to stretch it out, then add any nonverbal vocalizations that go along with those faces
  - Imagination: Juicy Words – Verbs! First, introduce the idea that verbs are words for things you DO. Next, talk about “juicy words,” those words that you can feel as you say them. Give some examples that are also verbs – scare, jump, chomp, etc. Ask students for examples and then have everyone act out each example given, encouraging them to use their whole bodies and their warmed-up voices!

### **Instruction:**

- **Prep for Reading**
  - Revisit the idea again that verbs are “words you do.”
  - Tell the students to listen to the verbs that they will hear in the story.
- **Reading**
  - Read the book *The Giving Tree* to the class as a whole, showing pictures, etc. If two teachers, take turns so that each teacher is reading every other page.
- **Exploring the Story**
  - Have students count off into two groups
  - One group will do the first half of the story; the second will do the second half of the story.
  - Each group will work together with their instructor to retell their portion of the story – the book at this point shouldn’t be necessary. Ask the students what they remember, in what order, etc., and have them work together to create it.
    - Before diving right into acting out the half of the story assigned, this is a great time to introduce the basic plot diagram found in most stories:



Use this diagram to point out to students that verbs are what keep the story moving. Identify with the group the key parts of *The Giving Tree* as following that diagram. (This can be a very basic introduction, as this overall diagram is a little advanced for this grade.)

- Students can form the tree in small groups using fabric to create leaves, apples, etc., which can be picked as needed. When the tree is cut down, having a different student create the stump is also a great idea!
  - Depending on the number of students in each group, one student can play the “boy” throughout, or a different student can be the “boy” each time he comes back to ask the tree for something (throughout the different stages of life).
  - Students who are particularly musical, don’t want to act, or who are chosen at random can use small percussion instruments to create a soundscape or sound effects for the story as it is told.
  - Throughout the work/rehearsal process and the presentation, the teacher should serve as the narrator (again, without the book).
- After 10-20 minutes (depending on the size of each group), the class should come back together. Each group will present/perform their part of the story for the other group. Obviously, the first part of the story will go first. Be sure to include a “curtain call” for each group so that they can get the applause that they deserve!

**Wrap-Up:**

- Take the time to bring students back to their “reading aloud” spots – either at their desks, on the floor, etc., depending on the classroom set-up.
- Revisit the idea of verbs with the class as a whole. Ask them what verbs they remember from the presentations that they saw.
- A great final reminder is that verbs are in every story they hear, every story they tell, and in everything they do – because verbs are words you do!