 Picture books & playbuilding

Background

This unit of work uses picture books as the stimulus for making, performing and appreciating drama. Picture books are a great resource for exploring visual and written language, imagination, values and deep contextual themes. They are a valuable stimulus for students to create drama and reflect these themes and experiences.

The essential content of the 7-10 drama syllabus outlines that students must engage with the elements of drama through various playbuilding opportunities. According to the 7-10 drama syllabus 2003,

‘Playbuilding refers to a group of students collaborating to make their own piece of drama. Through playbuilding, students should be able to explore their own worlds, create worlds beyond their immediate environment and investigate the social/cultural context of the human experience.’

[Drama 7-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/drama-7-10-syllabus) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2003.

Whilst this unit of work has been written for a Stage 4 drama class, it also includes relevant Stage 4 English Outcomes.

Unit outline

**Module one -** Introduction to Picture Books and Visual Literacy

**Module two -** Role & Character - Voices In The Park by Anthony Browne

**Module three -** Focus & Salience – The Red Tree by Shaun Tan

**Module four -** Tension – Stepping Stones by Margariet Ruurs

**Module five -** Playbuilding – The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg

**Module six -** Review

Cross curriculum content and key competencies

| Cross Curriculum Content | Key Competencies |
| --- | --- |
| Difference and Diversity | Literacy  Multicultural |

Outcomes Covered

Objective – Making (Drama)

| Outcomes | Indicators/Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1.1 - identifies and explores the elements of drama to develop belief and clarity in character, role, situation and action | To - use appropriate terminology to discuss and write about dramatic activities while making drama  To - develop and use language appropriate to a role/character  To - explore roles/characters and relationships through improvisation techniques within fictional situations and dramatic action  To - recognise, create and develop elements of drama to produce dramatic action and meaning  To - explore role and character through script, dramatic forms, performance styles and playbuilding  About - the use of drama terminology to express ideas  About - identifying and responding to the internal factors of role/character and translating these into voice and language that are unique to a role/character  About – the identification and development of the elements of drama which together create dramatic meaning and engagement |
| 4.1.2 - improvises and playbuilds through group-devised processes | To - create narrative structures to convey dramatic meaning  To - use elements of drama to manage the action in playbuilding  To - playbuild using a variety of stimuli  To - link playbuilding scenes  About - the creation and enhancement of dramatic meaning through elements of drama such as tension, moment or symbol  About - the process of using an active, collaborative process to create group or self-devised works |
| 4.1.3 - devises and enacts drama using scripted and unscripted material | To - explore and use drama terminology when making drama  To - write, draft and edit scripts or texts  To - use drama elements when creating or enacting scripts or texts  To - contribute ideas, collaborate and support the collective process to create effective drama  About - the dynamics of relationships in scripted works and developing character and/or role interaction on stage  About -the inter-relationship of features such as form, style, theme, purpose and intended audience in drama scripts or texts  About - the application of elements of drama such as focus, tension, time, space, rhythm, atmosphere and symbol to dramatic works |

Performing (Drama)

| Outcomes | Indicators/Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.2.1 – uses performance skills to communicate dramatic meaning | To - create a basic actor/audience relationship in a variety of performance situations.  To - create and maintain clarity of focus in dramatic action  About - the function of the actor/audience relationship  About - maintaining clarity of focus as action advances: using props, gestures, eye contact, language and voice |
| 4.2.3 - student explores and uses aspects of dramatic forms, performance styles,  theatrical conventions and technologies to create dramatic meaning. | To – explore, understand and use the dynamics of space  To - use improvisation skills, where appropriate, to explore dramatic contexts  To - demonstrate appropriate acting skills to communicate with different audiences  About - the ways in which levels, physical proximity and groupings can affect dramatic meaning  About - ways to adopt or adapt features of dramatic forms in playbuilding |

Appreciating (Drama)

| Outcomes | Indicators/Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.3.1 - A student identifies and describes elements of drama, dramatic forms, performance styles, techniques and conventions in drama | To - describe and respond to the conventions, dramatic techniques and technologies used in different performances.  To - respond appropriately to their work and the dramatic work of others  About - the identification and importance of the elements of drama that together create dramatic meaning and audience engagement |
| 4.3.2 - recognises the function of drama and theatre in reflecting social and cultural aspects of human experience | To - recognise and discuss the techniques, conventions and technologies of various dramatic forms and performance styles  About - recording their ideas in a drama workbook or in other forms such as oral/aural, visual  representation, discursive, written or word processed forms |

A (English)

| Outcomes | Indicators/Content |
| --- | --- |
| EN4-1A - responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure | * consider and analyse the ways their own experience affects their responses to texts * identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts * compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts * understand, interpret and discuss how language is compressed to produce a dramatic effect in film or drama |
| EN4-2A – effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies | * consider and analyse the ways their own experience affects their responses to texts * identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts * compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts * understand, interpret and discuss how language is compressed to produce a dramatic effect in film or drama |

B (English)

| Outcomes | Indicators/Content |
| --- | --- |
| EN4-4B - makes effective language choices to creatively shape meaning with accuracy, clarity and coherence | * analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance * recognise and appreciate the ways a wide range of texts communicate by using effective language choices * explore and analyse the ways purpose, audience and context affect a composer's choices of content, language forms and features and structures of texts to creatively shape meaning |

C (English)

| Outcomes | Indicators/Content |
| --- | --- |
| EN4-5C – thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts | * critically consider the ways in which meaning is shaped by context, purpose, form, structure, style, content, language choices and their own personal perspective * use imaginative texts as models to replicate or subvert textual conventions to create new texts * describe and explain qualities of language in their own and others' texts that contribute to the enjoyment that can be experienced in responding to and composing texts * engage in wide reading of self-selected texts for enjoyment and share responses individually, in pairs and/or in small groups |

D (English)

| Outcomes | Indicators/Content |
| --- | --- |
| EN4-7D – demonstrates understanding of how texts can express aspects of their broadening world and their relationships within it | * analyse how combinations of words, sound and images can create particular perspectives of the same event or issue such as environmental sustainability |

Extension questions for students include:

Paradox - How is it that simple structures, such as Picture Books, can communicate complex ideas?

Attribute listing - List in writing, or performance, five aspects that make an impacting picture book.

Analogy - How is a picture book like finding a letter from a friend?

Examples of change - What do you predict that picture books will look like in ten years?

Module one

Introduction to Picture Books and Visual Literacy

This module is an introduction to the study of images, using the metalanguage of visual literacy. The most important thing the teacher needs to do in this introductory module, is to communicate the powerful nature of picture books and present the reasons for sharing them. If you want students to engage with a topic or idea, images are an immediate connection to their emotions.

| Outcome | Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1.1 | use appropriate terminology to discuss and write about dramatic activities while making drama |
|  | the use of drama terminology to express ideas |
|  | explore roles/characters and relationships through improvisation techniques within fictional situations and dramatic action |
| 4.1.2 | the creation and enhancement of dramatic meaning through elements of drama such as tension, moment or symbol |
| 4.1.3 | explore and use drama terminology when making drama |
|  | the application of elements of drama such as focus, tension, time, space, rhythm, atmosphere and symbol to dramatic works |
| 4.2.1 | create a basic actor/audience relationship in a variety of performance situations. |
|  | the function of the actor/audience relationship |
| 4.3.1 | describe and respond to the conventions, dramatic techniques and technologies used in different performances |
| EN4-1A | identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts |
|  | consider and analyse the ways their own experience affects their responses to texts |
|  | compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts |
| EN4-2A | use processes of representation, including the creative use of symbols, images, icons, clichés, stereotypes, connotations and particular aural, visual and/or digital techniques |
| EN4-4B | analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance |

| Drama Objectives/ English Outcomes | Suggested Activities | Assessment | Resources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| - | As the students enter the room for the first lesson, be sitting at one spot in the room, holding a picture book, as though you are waiting for them to sit down and listen to it being read to them. Wait for a while and see if the students come and sit down in front of you. Prompt if necessary with small gestures. Wait until you have all of the students sitting on the floor in front of you. | - | 1 great picture book |
| EN4-1A | Ask the students why they came and sat down on the floor. What did it remind them of? Reminisce about when teachers read the students stories, when they were younger, and talk about why teachers did that? What do we get from sitting and listening to somebody read to us? What sort of books did they read (picture books)? Why would they have read picture books? | Discussion | - |
| EN4-1A | Read the students one of your favourite picture books. There are many suggestions in the resources. Be sure to use lots of expression, questioning, and draw their attention to the images in the book. | - | Selecting A Picture Book (teacher reference sheet) |
| - | Explain that picture books can be quite sophisticated. They are written not just for young children, but for teenagers and adults as well. Explain that in this unit, the students will be using picture books, as a stimulus for their drama activities. | - | - |
| Appreciating | Teach the students about the basic visual literacy features that you will be looking at in the unit. Students are to take notes about these features in their logbooks. | Logbooks | Visual Literacy Powerpoint |
| EN4-1A  EN4-4B | Using the list of visual literacy features which the class learnt about, analyse some of the pictures in the picture book that you read to the class earlier. Pay particular attention to salience, symbols, gesture and gaze, as these will all be used throughout the unit in the playbuilding. | Discussion | - |
| Appreciating  EN4-4B | Present the students with a collection of picture books that you have sourced. Have them work in small groups to analyse some of the picture books, looking for examples of salience, symbols, gesture and gaze. Students make notes in their logbooks about what they find. | Logbooks | Collection of picture books (ask your school librarian) |
| Making  EN4-2A | Focus on the visual technique of gaze. Get each group to share an example of gaze in their picture book and how it changed their viewing of the image. Give each group a simple situation (shopping with kids, cooking with the family, fixing a broken mower). They are to create two tableaux of the scene. One is to feature a character with ‘demand’ and the second one with ‘offer’. | Discussion | - |
| Performing  EN4-4B | Each group presents their set of tableaux to the class. The audience discuss which tableaux used ‘demand’ and which one ‘gaze’. How did effect the audience’s interpretation of the scene? | Tableaux performances | - |
| Appreciating  EN4-1A | Review some of the key features of visual literacy. Discuss the relevance to drama. Do audiences use the same skills to analyse drama? Do dramatists use some of the same techniques? Explain that in the next module, the class will be focusing on the role of character in drama, and using the visual images from a picture book to help them in creating their own dramatic scenes. | Discussion | - |

Module two

Role & Character

This module is focused on the element of drama – Role and Character, through a study of Anthony Browne’s picture book – Voices In The Park.

The syllabus describes these elements as:

Role - ‘…embracing a role involves representing a point of view and identifying with a particular set of values and attitudes. When a role is assumed, relationships can be established pivotal to dramatic actions, such as relationships between people, between people and ideas, between people and the environment. This negotiation of the situation and roles is an important and necessary phase in all drama.’

Character - ‘Characterisation is the process of developing from a role to build a complex personality and background for a particular character. Intention, status and attitude are integral ingredients for a character’s motivation and belief. Complexity in character can be developed through interaction and relationship with others.’

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| Outcome | Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1.1 | explore roles/characters and relationships through improvisation techniques within fictional situations and dramatic action |
|  | develop and use language appropriate to a role/character |
|  | identifying and responding to the internal factors of role/character and translating these into voice and language that are unique to a role/character |
| 4.1.2 | the process of using an active, collaborative process to create group or self-devised works |
| 4.1.3 | the dynamics of relationships in scripted works and developing character and/or role interaction on stage |
| EN4-2A | reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view |
| EN4-5C | critically consider the ways in which meaning is shaped by context, purpose, form, structure, style, content, language choices and their own personal perspective |
| EN4-7D | analyse how combinations of words, sound and images can create particular perspectives of the same event or issue such as environmental sustainability |

| Drama Objective/ English outcomes | Suggested Activities | Assessment | Resources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EN4-2A | As the students walk in the room, be sitting in the same position, with the picture book – Voices In The Park – held up in front of you ready to read. Have the students sit on the floor so that they can see the pictures when you start. Introduce the book and get students to make predictions about the sort of characters they might meet in this book. Ask them to pay particular attention to the different types of characters, and how they are portrayed, as you read the story. | - | Voices In The Park by Anthony Browne |
| Appreciating  EN4-2A | After reading the story aloud, discuss what it was about. Who were the main characters? How were they different? Give students the character comparison worksheet. As the discussion continues, students are to write notes/draw images about each of the characters and what we learn about them in the story. | Discussion  Logbooks | Character Comparison Worksheet |
| Appreciating  EN4-5C | Spend some time discussing the different fonts that are used in the book, when each voice is being heard. Each of the characters has a font which reflects their personality. Charles’ mother has a very formal font, whilst Smudge’s father has a much bolder and simpler font. Charles’ font is quite thin and delicate and Smudge’s is quite childlike. Have students make some notes and write their own name, in a similar style in each box on the worksheet, imagining that they are the character. | Discussion  Logbooks | - |
| Appreciating  Making  EN4-5C | Discuss the use of ‘line’ in the book. Browne has used straight, ordered lines when framing the pages involving Charles’ mother, especially when compared to rough edges on Smudge’s father’s pages. Lines also divide the social classes throughout the book. Students make notes on their Character Comparison sheet. Discuss how this idea could be used in a drama performance. Have a couple of tables, a selection of chairs and some small miscellaneous props. Imagine that you are going to show all four characters sitting down to have a cup of tea together. How could you use line and props to show the difference between them? Have different groups or students move the tables, chairs and props around to show this. | Observation of stage setting | Tables, chairs, miscellaneous props |
| Making  Appreciating  EN4-5C | Choose four students to take on the characters. One at a time, they are to walk onto the ‘set’ and sit down, as they believe their character would do. Discuss why they chose those movements. Choose four different students to take on the characters. Put four cups on the table. Ask each student to drink their cup of tea, as they believe their character would. Discuss as a class. | Observation of performances | 4 cups |
| Making  Appreciating  EN4-5C | Choose four different students to sit at the table and take on the roles. The students in the audience each take turns to ask one of the characters a question about themselves. The students in character must answer as they believe their character would. Discuss what makes a character believable for the audience. | Observation of performances | - |
| Making  Performing  EN4-7D | Have all students sitting back in a group. Explain what a monologue is and the next task. Students work in groups of four, representing the four characters in the story. They are to imagine that they have just finished their cup of tea and have stood up to say goodbye and go on their way. The group creates a freeze frame of this moment. The group will then choose one character/student to break from the freeze frame and address the audience with a short monologue, explaining how they feel about the meeting that just happened. Demonstrate what this monologue might look like. Students work in groups of four to choose their monologue character and create their freeze frame. After some time to work on their ideas, the freeze frame/monologues are presented to the class. | Observation of group work | - |
| Appreciating  EN4-2A | As a class, discuss the similarities between picture books and drama performances in regard to characterisation. Students make notes in logbooks. | Discussion  Logbooks | Logbooks |

Module three

Focus & Salience

This module is focused on the element of drama – Focus, through a study of The Red Tree written and illustrated by Shaun Tan. This module also addresses the English concept of salience.

The syllabus describes these elements as:

Role - ‘In Drama Years 7–10, two types of focus are developed. The first point of focus is the performer’s focus, used to create and sustain concentration and belief. The second type of focus refers to the point where the dramatic action is directed. The focus of any dramatic situation can be planned to help frame the action and can be created by attention to space, motifs, props, gestures, eye contact, language, voice and contrasts. As the drama progresses, a sharp focus must be maintained; otherwise the action will become blurred and the direction lost.’

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The glossary in the English K-10 syllabus describes salience as:

Salience - ‘A strategy of emphasis, highlighting what is important in a text. In images, salience is created through strategies like placement of an item in the foreground, size, and contrast in tone or colour. In writing, salience can occur through placing what is important at the beginning or at the end of a sentence or paragraph or through devices such as underlining or italics.’

[English K-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/english-year-10) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2012.

| Outcome | Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1.1 | recognise, create and develop elements of drama to produce dramatic action and meaning |
|  | use appropriate terminology to discuss and write about dramatic activities while making drama. |
|  | the identification and development of the elements of drama which together create dramatic meaning and audience engagement |
| 4.1.2 | use elements of drama to manage the action in playbuilding |
|  | the creation and enhancement of dramatic meaning through elements of drama such as tension, moment or symbol |
| 4.1.3 | explore and use drama terminology when making drama. |
|  | the inter-relationship of features such as form, style, theme, purpose and intended audience in drama scripts or texts |
|  | the application of elements of drama such as focus, tension, time, space, rhythm, atmosphere and symbol to dramatic works |
| 4.2.1 | create and maintain clarity of focus in dramatic action |
|  | maintaining clarity of focus as action advances: using props, gestures, eye contact, language and voice |
| 4.2.3 | the ways in which levels, physical proximity and groupings can affect dramatic meaning |
|  | explore, understand and use the dynamics of space |
| 4.3.1 | the identification and importance of the elements of drama that together create dramatic meaning and audience engagement |
| EN4-1A | compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts |
| EN4-5C | critically consider the ways in which meaning is shaped by context, purpose, form, structure, style, content, language choices and their own personal perspective |

| Drama Objective/ English outcomes | Suggested Activities | Assessment | Resources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EN4-5C | As the students walk in the room, be sitting in the same position, with the picture book – The Red Tree – held up in front of you ready to read. Have the students sit on the floor so that they can see the pictures when you start. Introduce the book and get students to make predictions about the book, based on the front cover. What sort of a character is this? What do you think the book will be about? What part of the image stands out? Ask students to look for examples of how Shaun Tan shows us where to focus in the images. | Discussion | The Red Tree by Shaun Tan |
| Appreciating  EN4-1A | After reading the story aloud, discuss what it was about. Who was the main character? What did you notice about the images? Have students draw a red tree in the middle of a page in their logbook. All around the tree, have them write down thoughts about the book and how it made them feel. Discuss what they wrote. Ask whether drama can make us feel the same way? How can people use drama to explore their own emotions? Explain that in this module, you will be looking at the techniques that Shaun Tan used to create focus in his book, and how we can use them to evoke emotion and direct focus in our drama. | Logbooks | Logbooks |
| Appreciating  Making  EN4-1A | Have students copy the following definition into their logbooks. Space in Drama – levels, physical proximity and groupings are all means of focusing an action. Look specifically at the page in the book with the fish in the city and the girl in the bottle. Discuss with the students how Shaun Tan has used levels, proximity and groupings to focus the audience’s attention (the girl feels trapped in both of these situations). Put students into small groups and ask them to create a freeze frame which shows one member of the group feeling trapped, using levels, proximity or groupings. How can they change their freeze frame to show a feeling of hope? How about being powerful? Students then do quick drawings in their logbook to show how they conveyed these three emotions with the use of space. | Freeze Frames  Logbooks  Discussion | Logbooks |
| Appreciating  Making  Performing  EN4-1A | Have students copy the following definition into their logbooks. Motif in Drama – these show up as repeated and obvious visual elements, physical movements, words or phrases or music, to spark the audience’s senses. Discuss the motif used in this book (The red leaf is on every page and is meant to symbolise hope and optimism) and make notes in logbooks. Break students into small groups to create a short scene with the theme of confusion. The one parameter around their scene is that it must include a sound motif. Brainstorm some sound motifs that could be used (scratching noise, stamping, clap, an exclamation). Students work in groups to create their scenes. They are performed for the rest of the class, with the audience discussing the motif and what it meant after each performance. | Logbooks  Group Work  Performances | Logbooks |
| Appreciating  Making  EN4-1A | Have students copy the following definition into their logbooks. Eye Contact in Drama – eye contact between individuals and within groups is an important way of controlling and focusing the action. Discuss what the students noticed about eye contact in the book. Does the girl ever make eye contact with another character or the audience? What effect does this have on the story? Have all of the students sit in a circle facing each other. Students look across the circle to another person and maintain their gaze. If two people make mutual eye contact, they must get up and swap places, maintaining eye contact at all times until they have sat back down. They cannot exchange places with the same person two times in a row. The game is played in silence. Many pairs can exchange at the same time. After the game is finished, discuss the following questions. Did anybody feel uncomfortable? Why? How did it feel to have somebody’s attention focused on you? If you broke eye contact, how did it effect the exchange? How can we use eye contact in drama pieces to focus our audience’s attention? | Discussion  Participation in the game | Logbooks |
| Making  EN4-5C | Break students into small groups. Each is given one page from The Red Tree to focus on. They are to recreate the emotion conveyed on their page, in a freeze frame. Their freeze frame must include an example of the use of space, motif or eye contact, to focus the audience’s attention. Have the groups placed around the room in order. Read the story out loud. As each page is read, the corresponding group displays their freeze frame. | Freeze Frames | - |

Module four

Tension

This module is focused on the element of drama – Tension, through a study of Stepping Stones, written by Margariet Ruurs and illustrated by Nizar Ali Badr.

The syllabus describes this element as:

Tension - ‘…the force which drives all drama. It creates a powerful and complex form of energy on stage which, in turn, generates a level of excitement in the audience. There are four major ways of creating and intensifying dramatic tension: the creation of a problem or task that characters must complete in order to achieve a goal or not; the development of relationships between characters and managing the relationships (eg. someone may change, someone may leave); the creation of surprise where the characters and audience don’t know what’s ahead (suddenly the circumstances unfold and a shock occurs); the development of a notion of mystery with the characters and audience not knowing what it all means (the action moves forward, everything becomes clear).’

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| Outcome | Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1.1 | recognise, create and develop elements of drama to produce dramatic action and meaning |
|  | the identification and development of the elements of drama which together create dramatic meaning and engagement |
| 4.1.2 | create narrative structures to convey dramatic meaning |
|  | the creation and enhancement of dramatic meaning through elements of drama such as tension, moment or symbol |
| 4.1.3 | the dynamics of relationships in scripted works and developing character and/or role interaction on stage |
| 4.2.3 | use improvisation skills, where appropriate, to explore dramatic contexts |
| 4.3.1 | describe and respond to the conventions, dramatic techniques and technologies used in different performances. |
| 4.3.2 | recording their ideas in a drama workbook or in other forms such as oral/aural, visual representation, discursive, written or word processed forms |
| EN4-1A | understand, interpret and discuss how language is compressed to produce a dramatic effect in film or drama |
| EN4-4B | recognise and appreciate the ways a wide range of texts communicate by using effective language choices |
|  | explore and analyse the ways purpose, audience and context affect a composer's choices of content, language forms and features and structures of texts to creatively shape meaning |
| EN4-5C | use imaginative texts as models to replicate or subvert textual conventions to create new texts |

| Drama Objectives/ English Outcomes | Suggested Activities | Assessment | Resources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EN4-1A  EN4-4B | As the students walk in the room, be sitting in the same position, with the picture book – Stepping Stones – held up in front of you ready to read. Have the students sit on the floor so that they can see the pictures when you start. After reading the book, let the students discuss what they heard and saw. What was the story about? Why did the author choose to illustrate it in that way? What did the family have to do to achieve their goal? Optional - Watch the video to gain an insight into the writing and illustrating of the book - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAo0mWStsIw | - | Stepping Stones by Margriet Ruurs |
| Appreciating | Write the word TENSION on the board. Ask students what they think that means in drama. How do we create it? Explain that there are four main ways to demonstrate tension in drama. In this module, the students will be examining all four. | - | - |
| Appreciating  Making  EN4-5C | Have students write the following definition in their books. The Tension Of The Task – this is created when we give the hero or heroine a task to complete and then set obstacles in their way. Urgency is added when there is a deadline. Discuss the task that was undertaken in Stepping Stones. How did the writer and illustrator keep our attention on the task that was being undertaken? Students create a storyboard in their logbooks, outlining the task and obstacles in the book. Place students in small groups. Discuss why the author would have chosen to use a child as a narrator. How does the language used help us to develop empathy? Explain that you are going to give them a situation and they are going to improvise a scene, until you give more information. Tell groups that they are a family, going to the park to fly their kite. Allow time for improvisation. Interrupt – one of you trips over and skins your knee. Allow time. Interrupt – the gates to the park are locked. Allow time. Interrupt – the kite’s tail has fallen off. You can add as many interruptions as you have time for. Discuss the need to throw obstacles in the way of our main characters in drama. | Logbooks  Storyboards  Observation of improvisations | Logbooks |
| Making  Performing  Appreciating  EN4-5C | Have students write the following definition in their books. The Tension of Surprise – this is the use of unexpected events to turn the audience’s expectations upside down. Place students in small groups. Allocate a well known fairy tale to each group (eg. 3 Little Pigs). Each group is to create a 5 minute recreation of the story, but with an element of surprise included. Groups perform their recreation for the rest of the class. Discuss how the use of surprise made the stories more interesting. | Observation of recreations  Discussion | Logbooks |
| Making  Appreciating  EN4-5C | Have students write the following definition in their books. The Tension of Relationships – is conflict between any of your characters. This is often shown through dialogue or monologue. Put students into pairs. Have them devise a scene where they are friends who are both going to the library to borrow a book. Now get them to add some tension to their scene, by adding an element of jealousy between the two characters. After the pairs act out their scenes, discuss as a class what difference the addition of tension made to the scene. Students write a sentence in their logbooks beginning with: Adding relationship tension to a scene means that … | Observation of scenes  Logbooks  Discussion | Logbooks |
| Making  Appreciating  EN4-5C | Have students write the following definition in their books. The Tension of Mystery - is any unanswered question that you place in your audience’s mind. These questions are what keeps them interested in the drama. Put students into small groups. They are to create an improvisation based on the following scenario. One group is to improvise whilst another group watches them as an audience. One person is lying in bed and wakes up suddenly. They seem shocked and not sure of where they are. Whilst the person is improvising this scene, other members of the group add sound effects (creaking doors, banging, cat meowing) which the student must react to. At the end of the improvisation, the audience talk about how the element of mystery affected them as viewers. Swap groups and try a different improvisation, such as walking down a dark alleyway. | Observation of improvisations  Discussions | Logbooks |

Module five

Playbuilding

This module is focused on the context of drama – Playbuilding, through a study of The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg.

The syllabus describes this context as:

Playbuilding - This is the compulsory dramatic context and a unit of playbuillding must be studied in every 100 hours of drama undertaken. It is a key method of making, as well as a style of performance, and it stands alone as a dramatic form in its own right. Playbuilding refers to a group of students collaborating to make their own piece of drama. Through playbuilding, students should be able to explore their own worlds, create worlds beyond their immediate environment and investigate the social/cultural context of the human experience. Students should playbuild in response to a range of different stimuli and investigate a range of dramatic forms and performance styles to assist them to devise and structure their own works.

| Outcome | Content |
| --- | --- |
| 4.1.1 | explore role and character through script, dramatic forms, performance styles and playbuilding |
| 4.1.2 | playbuild using a variety of stimuli |
|  | link playbuilding scenes |
|  | use elements of drama to manage the action in playbuilding |
|  | the creation and enhancement of dramatic meaning through elements of drama such as tension, moment or symbol |
| 4.1.3 | write, draft and edit scripts or texts |
|  | use drama elements when creating or enacting scripts or texts |
|  | contribute ideas, collaborate and support the collective process to create effective drama |
|  | the application of elements of drama such as focus, tension, time, space, rhythm, atmosphere and symbol to dramatic works |
| 4.2.1 | maintaining clarity of focus as action advances: using props, gestures, eye contact, language and voice |
| 4.2.3 | demonstrate appropriate acting skills to communicate with different audiences |
|  | ways to adopt or adapt features of dramatic forms in playbuilding |
| 4.3.1 | respond appropriately to their work and the dramatic work of others |
| EN4-4B | analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance |
| EN4-5C | critically consider the ways in which meaning is shaped by context, purpose, form, structure, style, content, language choices and their own personal perspective |

| Drama Objectives/ English Outcomes | Suggested Activities | Assessment | Resources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Appreciating  EN4-5C | As the students walk in the room, be sitting in the same position, with the picture book – The Mysteries of Harris Burdick – held up in front of you ready to read. Have the students sit on the floor so that they can see the pictures when you start. Explain that this picture book is very different to all of the others that you have read. There is very little text. Each image is its own story … for you to conjure up. Read through the text, stopping to discuss each of the images. |  | The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg |
| Making  Appreciating  EN4-5C | Divide the students into small groups. Each group can choose one of the images that intrigues them. Get each group to create a freeze frame that embodies the image. Have each group look at the different freeze frames and ask questions of the actors about things they wonder about. In their logbooks, each group then brainstorms what they think might have happened before the image and what might have happened after the picture. They create another freeze frame from before the image and after, and show each of them in sequence to the class. | Observation of group work and freeze frames | Extra copies of the images from the book |
| Appreciating  EN4-4B | Review what the students have learnt about during the previous modules (gaze, role and character, space, motif, eye contact and tension). Explain the playbuilding task. Students are to continue working in their groups, to create a 5 minute play, based on the image that they have chosen from the book. Their play must include at least one use of gaze and one use of demand. They must include diverse characters and a use of space which demonstrates relationships between the characters. They must include a motif in their play and at least one of the four types of tension. | - | Logbooks |
| Making  EN4-5C | Students work in their groups to brainstorm a plot and characters for their play. Students work through the process of building the play and writing their script in their logbooks. The teacher should meet with each group once in each session to ensure that they are staying on track and following the guidelines. Students should keep notes about the playbuilding process in their logbooks. | Observation of playbuilding process  Logbooks | Logbooks |
| Performing  Appreciating  EN4-5C | Once the plays have been written and rehearsed, they should be performed for the rest of the class. Show an enlarged copy of the image from the book before each performance. Allow time for the class to discuss after each performance the use of the key elements (gaze, space, motif, tension). | Performances  Discussions | Enlarged copies of images from the book |
| Appreciating  EN4-5C | Students reflect in their logbooks about the process of playbuilding. What did they enjoy? Did it work out as they had planned? What would they do differently next time? | Logbooks | Logbooks |

Module six

Review

This module allows students to reflect on the unit of work and share their own favourite picture books.

| Outcome | Content |
| --- | --- |
| EN4-5C | engage in wide reading of self-selected texts for enjoyment and share responses individually, in pairs and/or in small groups |
|  | describe and explain qualities of language in their own and others' texts that contribute to the enjoyment that can be experienced in responding to and composing texts |

| Drama Objectives/ English Outcomes | Suggested Activities | Assessment | Resources |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EN4-5C | Give students plenty of notice that you want them to bring along a picture book that they love to share with the class. It can be one from their childhood or a more recent one. Perhaps visit the school library to see what is available. | - | - |
| Appreciating  EN4-5C | Reflect on the start of the unit and how students felt about reading picture books in high school drama. Have their opinions changed at all? Discuss what use picture books could still be to them in any of their high school subjects. | Discussion | - |
| Appreciating  EN4-5C | Each student gets a turn to sit in the same chair that the teacher used throughout the unit, to read their picture book to the class and share why they chose it. This lesson should be more about the enjoyment of the texts and their public speaking, reading and performance skills, rather than analysis. | Reading of picture books | Some spare picture books for those who don’t bring one from home. |