

Grade Level: 7th grade

Time Duration: 2-4 weeks

Subjects Integrated:

Language Arts
Visual Art

Materials:

For Storyboard/Script:

- photocopies of story
- highlighters
- large poster paper
- markers

For Puppets:

- blank paper
- visual references
- drawing materials
- scissors
- glue
- black paper
- colored transparencies
- dowels
- brads

For Performance:

- white vinyl shower curtain (for shadow puppet screen)
- large wooden frame to stretch curtain over (optional)
- light source (overhead projector or clip lights)
- sound-makers/instruments

Designed and Implemented by:

Charlene McCabe-Stepney,
Language Arts teacher,
Calverton Elementary/Middle
School, and **Valeska Populoh**,
Visual artist and Puppeteer

Overview:

In this lesson, the class will transform *Brother Cricket and Brother Coyote*, a folk tale featured in the class textbook (although this can be adapted to any short story), into a shadow puppet show. The goal of this unit is to help students better understand the elements of literature through an experiential and arts-enriched approach to the content.



Essential/Guiding Question:

How can students better understand elements of literature, such as plot, cause and effect, characterization, setting, and theme by translating a story into a shadow puppet performance?

Maryland VSC Standards and Objectives Covered:

Language Arts:

Language Arts VSC Standard:

Language Arts Objective: Students will know how to read a literary text at a rate that is conversational and consistent, and in order identify and explain the main idea.

Language Arts VSC Standard: 1.E.4.e and 3.A.3.b

Language Arts Objective: Students will know how to read a literary text and analyze the events of the plot as well as details that provide information about the setting and characters.

Language Arts VSC Standard: 4.A.1.b, 4.A.2.a and 7.A.1

Language Arts Objective: Students will know how to read a selection from a literary text in order to identify the main action, sequence and characters in order to compose a dramatic scene with dialogue. Students will also know how to orally present this scene to their peers.

Language Arts VSC Standard: 1.0.C. and 1.E.1.a

Language Arts Objective: Students will comprehend the elements of a script by identifying the dialogue, narrative and stage directions in *Brother Coyote and Brother Cricket*. Students will learn to paraphrase by writing the dialogue in their own words.

Maryland VSC Standards Covered (con't):

Theater:

Fine Arts Standard: (Theater) 3.2.a

Fine Arts Objective: Students will know how to use appropriate vocal skills, like intonation, to evoke a specific character or mood in telling a story.

Fine Arts Standard: (Theater) 3.1 b

Fine Arts Objective:

Students will identify and use dramatic narrative conventions to adapt scenes from prose and other forms of literature by re-writing the story of *Brother Cricket* and *Brother Coyote* as a play in their own words.

Fine Arts Standard: (Theater) 3.0.2.a and b

Fine Arts Objective:

Students will use appropriate vocal skills and movements and work collaboratively to create and perform scenes for their shadow puppet *production* *Brother Cricket* and *Brother Coyote*.

Fine Arts Standard: (Theater) 1.0.2.b

Fine Arts Objective: Students will view and analyze two (filmed) shadow puppet performances in order to compare and identify how the artists use light, voice, music and sets to create mood and establish a setting.

Visual Arts:

Fine Arts Standard: (Visual Arts) 1.2.b and 3.1.c

Fine Arts Objective: Students will understand how to capture the basic elements of a scene, such as setting, main characters and action in a collaged image in order to create an effective storyboard panel.

Fine Arts Standard: (Visual Arts) 1.0.1.b

Fine Arts Objective: Students will identify, describe and produce visual representations of the physical qualities of observed form by creating a sketch of their animal.

Fine Arts Standard: (Visual Arts) 3.1 b and c

Fine Arts Objective: Students will select and use a variety of tools, materials, processes and techniques safely to solve specific visual problems by creating their shadow puppet.

Activities and Procedures:

Lesson 1:

Introduction of Puppetry Unit:

The teacher explains that the class is going to transform one of the stories in the textbook into a special kind of play using shadows. The students will get a chance to perform it for a group of younger students from the school.

Dramatic Reading :

The teacher will demonstrate how to read a story by using proper intonation and voice. Students will take turns reading the story. The teacher will stop the class occasionally to ask questions about the characters and what they would sound like given the author's description.

Identifying the Main Idea:

The main idea or lesson of the story will be discussed. The teacher will relate this to the definition of a fable as a story. Students will be asked to read through the story and identify the main theme or idea. Students will make a web of the main ideas, showing the supporting details. Students will also draw a picture that captures the main idea or theme.

Introduction of Writing a Script:

Students will be told about the next step in transforming the story into a play: identifying the main parts of the story, the characters, setting and writing a script.

Lesson 2:

Identifying Parts of a Story:

The teacher will read the first part of the story and write down the setting, characters that appear and the main action on a chart or board. The teacher will then explain tableau - a group of models or motionless figures representing a scene from a story or from history. Student volunteers will create a tableau of the scene. The class will continue reading the story as a group and listing main parts of the story and characters. Students will then work in small groups to continue reading the rest of the story and list main parts of the story and characters. At the end of class, all will come together to create a list of setting, characters and events.

Lesson 3:

"Scripting the Scene"

The teacher will surprise the class with an improvised scene involving a funny event to begin the class. The teacher will then guide the class through 'scripting' this scene - helping them to identify the main characters, sequence of action and modeling the writing of dialogue on the overhead/board.

Students "script" the fable in teams:

Students will work in small groups to transform one segment of the fable *Brother Coyote and Brother Cricket* into a script form, using their storyboard as a guide. Students will use colored markers to highlight the 1) dialogue 2) possible sound effects 3) stage directions and 4) narrative. Students are guided through an example of text that has no dialogue, but implies that the characters are speaking. Students then write the dialogue in their own words (paraphrasing).

Sharing:

Students will present their script segments to each other by reading them aloud/ acting them out. Before the next session, the teacher will read through these mini-scripts and combine them into one main script for the class.

Lesson 4:

“Capturing the essence of a character” and Sketching out Shadow Puppets

Students will choose their character’s name out of a hat. Once everyone has picked an animal, they will receive their visual reference to start their thinking as they watch the modeling/ demonstration (*see attached “Visual Reference Sheet” example*). The teacher will choose a character out of the hat (“Giraffe”). The teacher will then show the visual reference to the class, and ask the class to identify the distinguishing features of the animal.

Students will write a descriptive sentence about their character, based on the following prompt: “My character is _____(name). The defining characteristics are _____(adj)_____ _____(noun)_____, _____(adj)_____ _____(noun)_____ and _____(adj)_____ _____(noun)_____.”

Example: My character is the Giraffe, Its defining characteristics are a long neck, long legs and stumpy feelers.” The teacher will instruct students to use the three defining characteristics from their sentences when making the sketch of their animal.

Then, the teacher will present a demonstration on making a sketch of the animal, emphasizing the following concepts and skills: breaking the complex shape into simpler shapes (*see attached example of an elephant*), using the visual references and edges of the paper as guides, using a light line and the eraser as a tool. The vocabulary of the contour line will be defined. Students will return to their seats and receive their rubric. (see attached rubric)

Lesson 5:

Cutting out the Puppet

Complex Shape Cutting Activity – Students will do a warm up cut-paper exercise to learn techniques for cutting complex shapes out of paper. A handout with the same complex shape will be distributed for a guided cutting activity (see attached “Making the Cut!” sheet). (Cutting around the shape, strategies for cutting into the shape etc.) Students will be given 5 minutes to cut a complex shape out of their paper, applying their skills. Students will then take turns showing off their creations on the overhead.

The teacher will present a demonstration on transferring the sketch onto black paper and then cutting out the shape, and adding features, such as colored foil, the control stick(s) and moving parts. Students will work on transferring their sketch onto black paper and making their puppet. The teacher will walk around to assist students. At the end of class, students will show their in progress or finished puppets to the class and complete their self-assessment rubric (see attached “Puppet Rubric”)



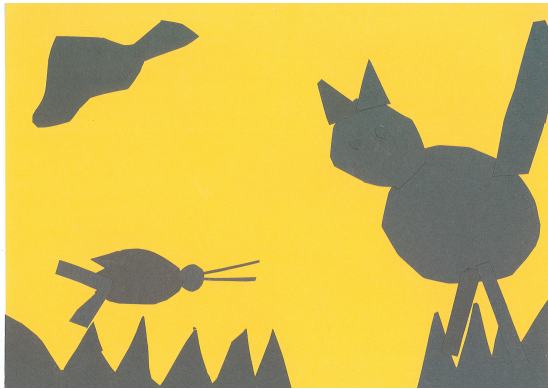
Lesson 6:

Writing a Script from the Text

Students are told that they will be transforming the text of the story into a script. The teachers demonstrate how to differentiate the dialogue and the narrative, and guide students through

paraphrasing the dialogue, or putting it in their own words. As an example, they will write a script on the board, using stage directions, narrative and dialogue.

Students will work in small groups to identify dialogue and narrative, to paraphrase their dialogue into their own words and add stage directions and sound effects. Each group will produce a sheet identifying elements of the text, a draft script, and a continuation of their small group rubric (see attached “Teamwork Rubric”).



Lesson 7:

Performing the Puppet Show

The teacher will lead the class in a warm-up game: “What are you doing?” Theater Game. One student stands up and performs a motion (ie: driving a car, or taking a shower). The next person in the circle asks, “Hey, so-and-so, what are you doing?” The person performing the motion answers with another action (ie: “I am brushing my teeth” or “I am playing basketball.”) The person who just asked the question then has to perform that action. The next person in the circle then asks “Hey, what are you doing?” and the games continues around the circle. Any such game that loosens up their voices, or gets students prepared for performing would work here.

The teacher tells students that they will be rehearsing their show and that they will have a chance to perform it for a group of younger kids from their school (For example, the teacher can invite a couple of Kindergarten classes to watch the performance.)

The Rehearsal:

The students will run through the performance a couple of times. (This lesson usually spans a couple of days.) The teacher and artist will have blocked out the performance in advance, and set up the room to accommodate the performers, musicians and narrators. During the rehearsal, the teacher/artist provides feedback and/or asks guiding questions to the class about how to improve the performance. This may include showing how to manipulate the puppets across the screen or how to modulate and project the voice in order to be heard well by the audience and expressive. Students will be asked to critique their rehearsal as well. Some appropriate questions are: *What is working? What needs to be improved upon? Does everyone hear the narrators? Are the character’s voices as expressive as could be? Are the puppets moving well and visibly across the screen? How is the flow of performers in the back-stage area?, etc..* A form of PQP (praise, question, polish) can be applied to this process.

The Performance:

The actual performance is not critiqued (unless there are multiple performances. In that case, the first one can be assessed.) Otherwise, students should just be celebrated for their hard work and for pulling off a performance. (It is always a big feat!) Adequate time should be allotted on the day of the performance for the teacher and students to have closure on their experience. The teachers may wish to return to questions posed on the first day. For instance, during the first class, the teacher posed the question “who considers themselves an artist/performer?” Only a couple of people identified as artists or performers on the first day. The question was posed again after the last day’s show and for each category, between 7-10 students replied in the affirmative.

Accommodations/Modifications:

The nature of the performance allows for the teacher to accommodate a lot of different kinds of learners/student needs and abilities. Strong readers can often serve as narrators, while energetic and kinesthetic children may be well suited to perform with the puppets. Others might thrive in the sound-effects and sound-making department, while others may simply want to announce the show or welcome the audience into the room.

Visual Reference Sheet example

(Images for reference sheets can be found easily with Google image search.)



Common Opossum



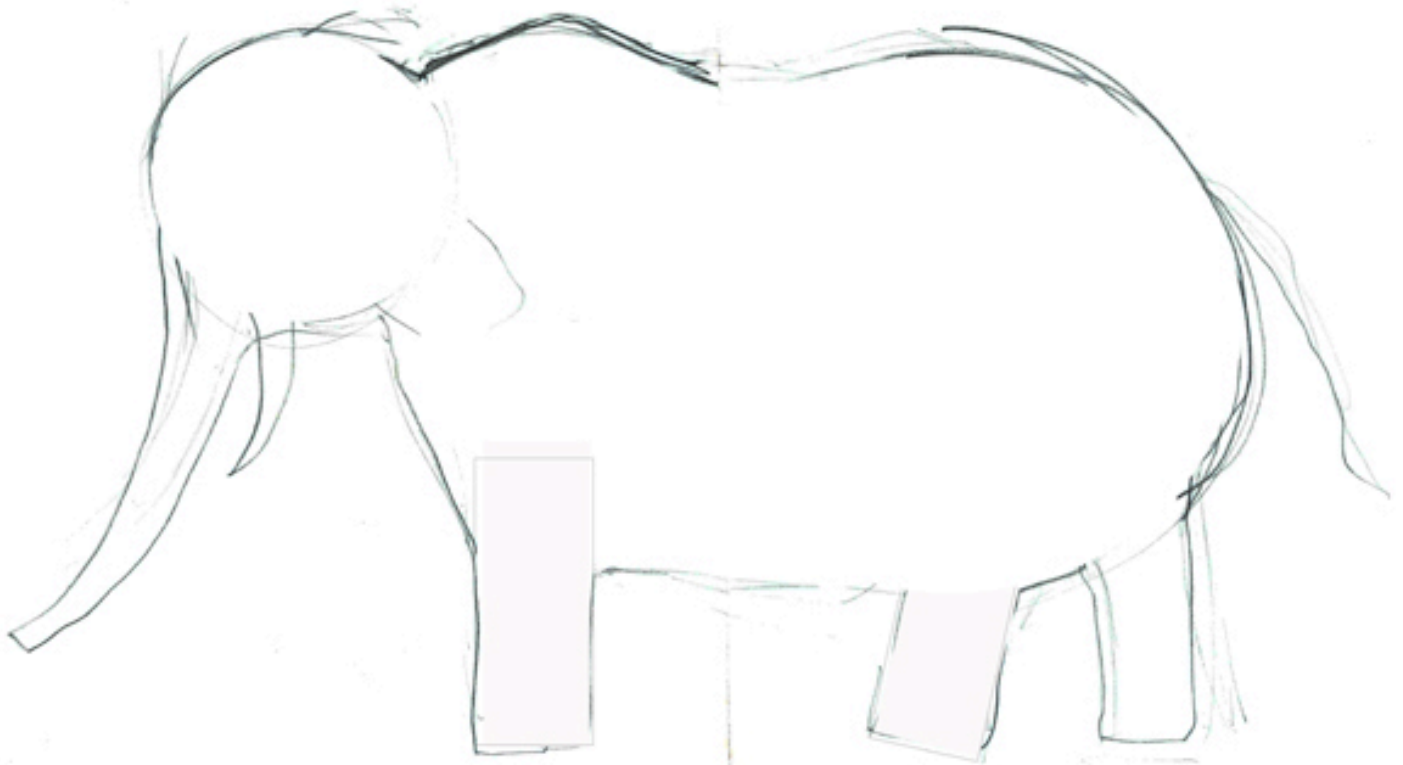
POSSUM

Example of reference sheet for “Silhouette”

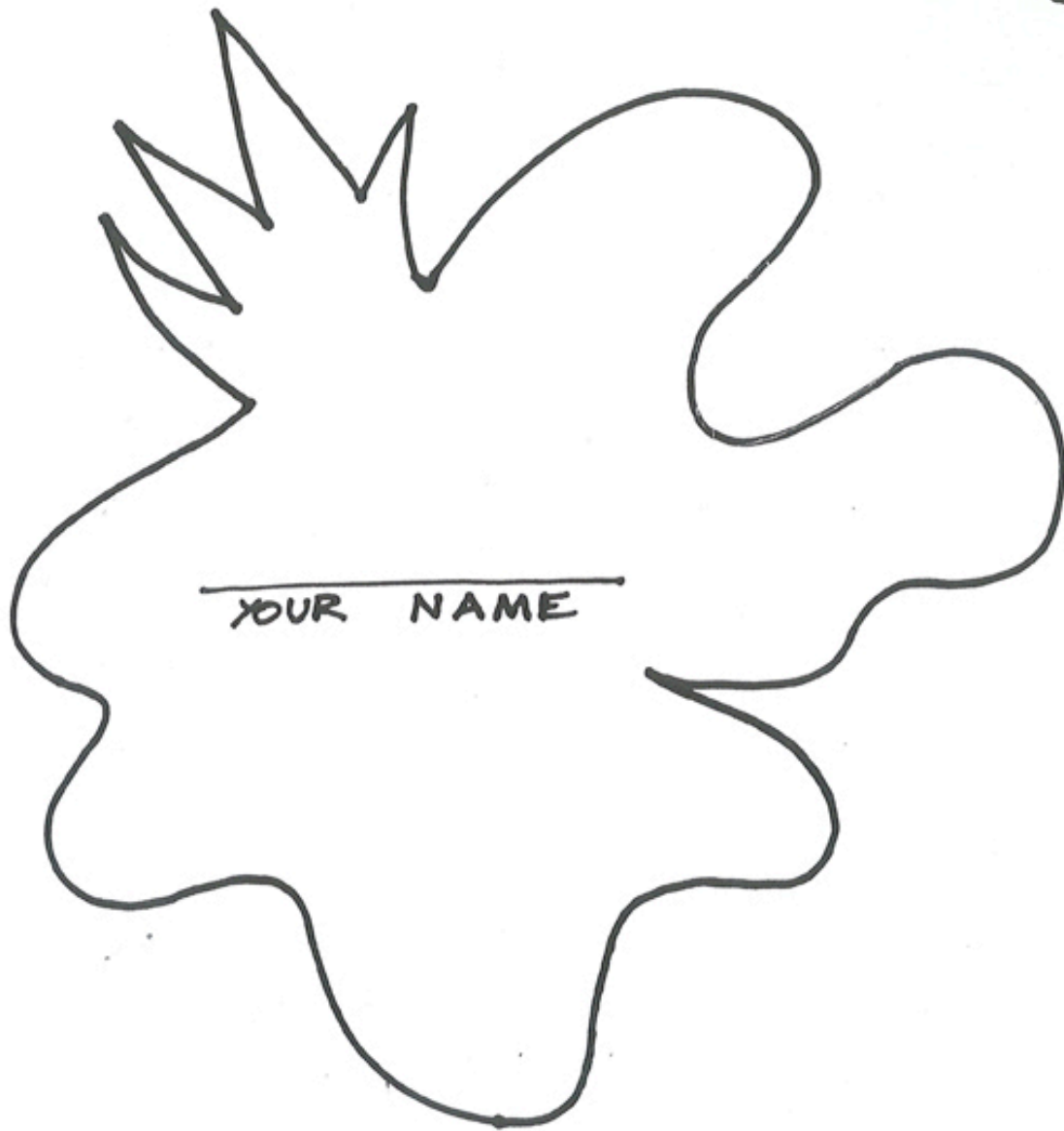


Example of descriptive sentence and breaking complex shape into simpler shapes.

My animal is the elephant. Its defining characteristics are a stringy tail, sharp tusks, a long trunk and floppy ears.



MAKING THE **CUT!**



Puppet Rubric

Skills		Criteria			Points
	1	2	3	4	
Sketch meets requirements, including thoughtful consideration of scale, size, and contour	Does not meet any of the requirements	Meets some of the requirements	Meets most of the requirements	Meets all of the requirements	
Sketch includes at least three defining characteristics or features	Does not include defining characteristics	Includes one defining characteristic	Includes two defining characteristics	Includes three or more defining characteristics	
Character description includes three defining characteristics using adjectives	Does not include defining characteristics	Includes one defining characteristic	Includes two defining characteristics	Includes three or more defining characteristics	
Puppet is cut, assembled and constructed with attention to craftsmanship, including careful cutting, gluing and assembly	Does not demonstrate attention to craftsmanship	Demonstrates basic understanding of craftsmanship	Demonstrates careful attention to craftsmanship	Demonstrates excellent craftsmanship	
Puppet demonstrates understanding of skills and concepts, including construction, expressive use of shape, color, line	Does not demonstrate understanding of skills or concepts	Demonstrates basic understanding of skills and concepts	Demonstrates good understanding of skills and concepts	Demonstrates excellent understanding of skills and concepts	
Puppet includes at least three defining characteristics or features	Does not include defining characteristics	Includes one defining characteristic	Includes two defining characteristics	Includes three or more defining characteristics	

Teamwork Rubric

Students Names:

Skills		Criteria			Points
	1	2	3	4	
Helping: The teacher observed the students offering assistance to each other.	ALL of the time	MOST of the time	SOME of the time	NONE of the time	
Listening: The teacher observed students working from each other's ideas.	ALL of the time	MOST of the time	SOME of the time	NONE of the time	
Participating: The teacher observed each student contributing to the project.	ALL of the time	MOST of the time	SOME of the time	NONE of the time	