

## Drama Posters: Noters for teachers

### Poster 5

Responding to drama: Where do we find drama in our everyday lives?

Focus age range: years 1–8

- About poster 5
- Learning opportunities, curriculum links
- Key information

### About poster 5

- Introduction
- List of images on poster 5

### Introduction

This poster focuses on where we see drama occurring in our everyday lives. The images show children engaged in dramatic activities in a range of situations in their daily lives.

The poster also shows the use of costumes and props, and other simple technologies, such as puppets, computer programs, stilts, and make-up that help children to become engaged in dramatic activities.

The images provide a starting point for students to talk about where drama happens in their lives and what they learn from their dramatic experiences.

Note: All references to poster images are to the images on this poster unless otherwise indicated.

### List of images on poster 5

Title sequence (child dressing up)

- 1 What's the Time, Mr Wolf?, Island Bay School.
- 2 Taita College's Arahi Kapa Haka group.
- 3 Bookworm.
- 4 Playing doctor and nurse.
- 5 Cousins with gaming console.
- 6 Stilt-walker and child from The Turnbull Library *Evening Post* Collection.
- 7 Outdoor performance by The Plops, Capital E National Theatre for Children, Civic Square, Wellington.
- 8 Interview at Capital E National Theatre for Children.
- 9 Face painting at the Cuba Street Carnival, Wellington, 2005.

For copyright details for these images, see the acknowledgments on the foot of each poster.

### Learning opportunities and curriculum links

Students learn to respond to drama by talking about the drama experiences that they engage in, both in school situations and in their daily lives.

When responding to drama, students work across the four strands of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*:

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[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/drama/posters/5/index\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/drama/posters/5/index_e.php)

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- Developing Practical Knowledge in Drama (PK)
- Developing Ideas in Drama (DI)
- Communicating and Interpreting in Drama (CI)
- Understanding Drama in Context (UC).

As students progress in their ability to view and discuss drama, they will be able to:

- demonstrate appropriate audience behaviours when presenting and sharing (level 1)
- identify and discuss how drama tells stories (level 1)
- discuss the use of elements within a shared work (level 2)
- discuss a performance's intention and how it is communicated, making comparisons with their own work (level 2)
- observe the use of elements, techniques, and conventions in order to identify strengths and weaknesses (level 3)
- identify and discuss how drama creates meaning and engages the audience (level 3)
- identify and discuss how and why communities express themselves through drama in the past and the present (level 3)
- evaluate how elements, techniques, and conventions shape a performance (level 4)
- recognise dramatic texts as representative of particular forms in cultures and histories (level 4).

*The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars: The Arts (the drama matrix)*

For more detail on the key aspects of learning that inform progression in drama, refer to [The Arts \(drama matrix\)](#).

[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/index\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/index_e.php)

Key information

The key information for poster 5 is divided into two sections. Part 1 discusses the poster images, focusing on where drama and dramatic play is occurring in everyday life. Part 2 suggests key content to consider with students before or after they view their own or other people's drama.

- [Part 1 Everyday drama](#)  
Dramatic play and dressing up  
Games  
Television and film  
Dressing up as or pretending to be favourite characters  
Community cultural performances and practices  
Computer and console role play  
Community and street theatre  
Community and school-based drama experiences
- [Part 2 Student responses](#)  
Developing good audience habits  
The elements of drama  
Drama techniques  
Conventions

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Contrast  
Use of symbols, props, costumes, and cultural artefacts  
Technologies such as puppetry, stilts, mask, and face painting  
Responding to how drama tells stories

## **Part 1 Everyday drama**

Where do we see drama occurring?

Drama occurs in a range of settings within children's daily lives, often in unexpected places.

- Dramatic play and dressing up
- Games
- Television and film
- Dressing up
- Computer and console role play
- Community and street theatre
- Community and school-based drama experiences

### **Dramatic play and dressing up**

Children engage in dramatic play on their own, with other children, and with adults in a range of contexts, for example, playing at being Mum or the doctor (images 4 and 10, poster 5). This allows them to experiment with what it is like to take on roles as an adult and play at controlling situations and making decisions. For more information about dramatic play, refer to the Key information sections in the chapters on posters 1 and 4.

### **Games**

When children play games such as What's the Time, Mr Wolf? (image 1), they develop an understanding of the "rules" of pretend, playing with the elements of role, time, tension, and space. Games encourage children to explore and experiment with moving their bodies and using their voices, as they learn how to share space with others and develop strategic thinking and problem solving.

### **Television and film**

Television and film (image 7, poster 1) are some of the most common and accessible drama experiences for children, where they see and listen to stories about lives both similar and different to their own.

### **Dressing up**

(Dressing up as or pretending to be favourite characters – The title sequences on all six posters, and images 3 and 10, poster 5.) There are many occasions when children take on roles as favourite characters from books (for example, during book weeks, parties, or discos)

or as favourite movie or television characters, often playing games in role with friends at school, for example, as superheroes or cartoon characters.

### **Community cultural performances and practices**

Children participate in cultural drama experiences (image 2, poster 5) both as performers and audience members, experiencing traditional and innovated cultural art forms and practices. These experiences can provide a feeling of being valued and of belonging to a community, as well as giving a sense of identity.

### **Computer and console role play**

Many computer and console games (image 5, poster 5) take children into an imaginary world where they take on roles. Alternatively, they create their own imaginary world, practising with creating stories through gaming roles and with controlling these imaginary lives.

### **Community and street theatre**

There are many opportunities for children to see drama and theatre in action within their community (images 6 and 9, poster 5): at parks; in community-shared spaces such as sportsgrounds, marketplaces, and town squares; and in community theatres.

### **Community and school-based drama experiences**

Children have opportunities to enjoy more formal theatre experiences from professional and community performers within their local community and at school (images 7 and 8 on this poster and image 11 on poster 4). Often these performances will have a particular learning purpose.

## **Part 2 Student responses**

This section provides information about things to consider when students view and respond to drama.

- Developing good audience habits
- The elements of drama
- Drama techniques
- Conventions
- Contrast
- Use of symbols, props, costumes, and cultural artefacts
- Technologies such as puppetry, stilts, mask, and face painting
- Responding to how drama tells stories

### **Developing good audience habits**

At level 1, students learn the protocols around being a good audience member. As students progress, they develop an understanding of how the audience engages with the performers during the performance and vice versa; when it is appropriate to respond verbally or with clapping; and when it is necessary to remain silent and contained.

These audience protocols extend to presentations within their own and others' classrooms and to outside performers who might visit the school. Critical awareness and discernment in the students can be encouraged by talking afterwards about what they have viewed, with particular attention to the key ideas in the performance and how these ideas were communicated by the presenters and performers.

When responding to drama, students will need to have some practical knowledge of how drama works so that they can discuss the experience with an understanding that goes beyond their enjoyment of the work. For example, if a performance is occurring outside, students might like to consider the advantages and disadvantages of this and how an outdoor setting might enhance a performance.

Some knowledge of the following ideas will help students make informed responses.

### **The elements of drama**

The elements, the key building blocks of drama, are:

- **Role:** Role refers to the participants in the drama using their imagination to identify with someone else in order to explore and represent experience from that role's perspective or viewpoint.
- **Time and space (place):** Time and space refer to the setting of the drama – the imaginary world in which the players and the audience engage. In the imaginary world of drama, time is flexible and can be organised to suit the purposes of the participants. The teacher/director can slow down or speed up time. Students/actors can move from place to place easily, changing the performance space into a range of different imaginary spaces as required.
- **Action:** The action is what happens in the drama, both the external actions and the inner shifts in the characters' lives – their changing thoughts, their discoveries, and their peaks and troughs of emotion.
- **Tension:** This drama element uses mental pressure through emotional intensity to provoke a response, focus attention, or heighten involvement.
- **Focus:** Focus refers to the key idea or the central purpose of the drama. Focus also refers to the point onstage that demands the audience's attention.

### **Drama techniques**

Drama techniques (voice, gesture, facial expression, and movement) are ways of showing who the character is in the drama and what that character is thinking, feeling, and doing.

### **Conventions**

For a summary about how drama is structured by using dramatic conventions, refer to the section [poster 3 key information](#).

## Contrast

The dramatic contrasts are:

- sound and silence
- movement and stillness
- light and dark.

In drama, subtle use of contrast helps to create or enhance meaning.

See Morgan and Saxton page 4 for a more detailed description of contrasts. For an example of students becoming aware how contrast (sound and silence) enhances understanding of a role's feelings, see the level 3 exemplar Gargoyles.

[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr\\_3b\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr_3b_e.php)

## Use of symbols, props, costumes, and cultural artefacts

In drama, performers use their bodies in a variety of ways to "tell" the story. As well as helping your students to "read" the performers' body movements and to discuss their understandings, you can help them to look at what the choice of props, significant symbols, costumes (including colours), and cultural artefacts (such as taiaha) add to the drama (images 2, 3, and 7 on this poster and images 7 and 11 on poster 1).

## Technologies such as puppetry, stilts, mask, and face painting

When responding to drama that uses technologies such as puppetry, stilts, face painting, and masks (images 2, 6, 8, and 9, poster 5), there are opportunities to look at:

- The technologies: How are masks made? What are the techniques for walking on stilts?
- The history of specific technologies: Where did this form of technology originate?
- Variations of the technology: What variations (for example, marionettes, hand puppets, giant puppets) have been developed in different cultures or periods?
- How the technology is used: How is this technology used in a specific performance or presentation? What is its effectiveness? What restrictions does it impose?
- How students might modify the technology: How could this technology be used to present or perform a particular drama?

## Responding to how drama tells stories

The following exemplars show some ways in which students respond to their own and other people's drama work:

- Level 1: [Sanja Is a Vet](#)

[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr\\_1b\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr_1b_e.php)

Sanja responds to her own drama experience and to what she enjoyed.

- Level 3: [Beyond Enjoyment](#)

[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr\\_3a\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr_3a_e.php)

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Students talk about a performance they have seen at school and critically analyse how the performers connected with the audience.

- Level 4: The Orphan Train

[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr\\_4b\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/drama/dr_4b_e.php)

A student talks about how she developed her role and how her role changed and deepened as the drama progressed.

### **Discussion questions**

The images on poster 5 are intended to help younger students look at their beginning experiences of drama with different and more informed eyes.

- What can you see happening in this image?
- Where is this happening? How will the place affect the experience?  
[Both positively and negatively]
- When have you experienced this (type of activity)?  
[For example: "When have you played games like What's the Time, Mr Wolf?" "Who was in role in the game?" "How did you know when to run away?" You could talk about the contrasts of movement and stillness in this game – creeping up on the wolf and then freezing. "When you played shouting and silence, how did it make you feel inside?" "How can we create this kind of feeling in our drama?"]
- Who do you think these people are? How can you tell? What are they doing? What are they carrying? When have you seen something like this in your life? What did you enjoy about it? How did it make you feel?
- What might the people be saying to each other?
- What costumes do you see the people wearing? How do you know that they are costumes? Why did they choose the particular colours? When have you dressed up in costume?
- When have you played at home or at school by pretending to be other people? Who did you pretend to be? What did you do when you were that person? How did you use your body and voice when you were that person? Who was in role with you? What stories do you make up when you are in role?
- What is your favourite TV programme or movie? Why do you like it? Who is your favourite character? What do they do that you like?
- Where could an audience watch what's going on in this picture? In what ways would the performers have to change their performance if they were inside?
- What objects can you see in the picture? How are the performers using the objects?  
[In particular, with pictures that strongly feature technology, you might focus on questions that unpack the way the technologies work. For example: "How would the man get up onto these stilts?" "How does he stay up on them?" "What problems might he come across?" "What do you think the stilts are made from?" "What do you think it would be like to be up on stilts like that?" "What would it be like to be at the bottom of the stilts?"]
- How do the performers use their bodies to show what's happening?

Discussions around protocols for performances in particular spaces, such as marae, would be useful, especially if the children are going on a marae visit or are welcoming others onto the school grounds in a pōwhiri.

Some starter questions to use before or after viewing drama include:

- What works/worked well in the drama?
- What do you feel about ...?
- I wonder what would happen if ...?
- What do you think about when you look at ...?
- How might you change this so that ....?
- If we changed the focus to [describe particulars], what would happen?
- How could you tell what was happening?
- I wonder why (a certain character) did that?
- What was (a certain role) thinking at that moment?

### **Suggested activities**

Set up a **display in the classroom** that shows drama happening in a range of contexts. You might choose to include terminology such as the elements, techniques, and conventions around the display to stimulate conversation and for easy reference. Use this display at the beginning or end of drama sessions as a focus for talking about your particular learning purpose.

For example you might be looking at working in role. Before the drama begins, you could use the display as the focus for discussing what happens when we work in role. Afterwards, you could use the display to reflect on the drama that you have completed, in particular what roles you and the students took on.

Create a **shared class book** detailing drama performances that are happening in the school, at home, in the community, within New Zealand, and further afield. Children can write short reviews of drama they have experienced, recommend television shows and movies that they have seen, find relevant pictures and articles from magazines and newspapers, and write short responses about drama that they have done themselves. This book can be kept over a term or longer and shared with other classes.

Older students can keep a **journal** recording their responses to their drama learning. They can record quotes, take pictures of their work, write or draw about their learning, and collect brochures, information, or articles about their key learning.

Students can respond to a particular drama experience by **writing, drawing, talking, making art, or using reflective drama conventions** such as a reflection circle, a freeze frame, thought tracking, or marking the moment.

## Resources

Ministry of Education (2006) *Playing Our Stories: Classroom Drama in Years 1–6*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2003). *Telling Our Stories: Classroom Drama in Years 7–10*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Morgan, N. and Saxton, J. (1991 reprint). *Teaching Drama: A Mind of Many Wonders*. Cheltenham: Stankley Thornes.

O'Toole, J. and Dunn, J. (2002). *Pretending to Learn: Helping Children Learn through Drama*. Frenches Forest, NSW: Pearson Education.

## Websites

### Drama games

David Farmer's website includes suggestions for drama games. David Farmer's drama games <http://www.david-farmer.com/drama.htm>

### Process drama

Reading Online International Reading Association

<http://www.readingonline.org/international/hertzberg/>

The International Reading Association's site contains an example of a teacher's drama unit: Engaging Critical Reader Response to Literature Through Process Drama by Margery Hertzberg, which includes the students' responses to the drama experience.

### Puppets

English Online English Online

<http://english.unitecology.ac.nz/resources/units/puppets/home.html>

English Online includes a work unit on puppets for level 3 (years 5–6).

### Stilt-walking

Juggling Information Service Juggling Information Service

<http://www.juggling.org/help/circus-arts/stilts/>

This website includes a section on stilt-walking.