



Lesson: Exploring our Environment

Ages: 4th and 5th grade

Supplies needed: No supplies needed.

Project Intro: This lesson helps children explore how to bring environment (where) into play when making acting choices.

Materials Reference: Teaching Drama, The Essential Handbook (beatbybeat Press)

Project steps:

Warm-Up Activity:

- **Environment Exploration**

- In a standing circle, have the children and other family members participating close their eyes and imagine they have been playing in the snow for a very long time.
- Ask them *“What does it feel like? Put that feeling into your whole bodies; your shoulders, faces, backs, hands and toes.”*
- Now ask them *“Are your feet a little wet? Are your fingers numb? Are you shivering?”*
- Tell them *“A snow storm has just picked up and the snow is lashing at your faces. Put it in your body.”*
- Then tell them *“Finally you walk into a warm cabin. There’s a fire burning. You take off your big, damp jacket. Someone hands you a cup of hot*

chocolate. You start to feel warmth in your whole body as you sit down by the fire.”

- Tell them to open their eyes.
- Ask them “*What did it feel like going from one environment to another? How did it change your body?*”

Drama Activity:

- **Birthday Party Environment**

- Divide everyone into two groups.
- Tell the first group to go first and have the group choose one person to be the birthday boy or girl.
- Explain that they are all at a birthday party, and their goal is to sing “Happy Birthday” to the birthday boy/girl.
- They are going to repeat this scene several times, however before each scene you are going to give them a different environment. Suggestions include:
 - Library
 - Hail Storm
 - Beach
 - Cave
 - Forest
 - Living Room
 - Sewer
 - North Pole
 - Supermarket
 - Hospital
 - Airport
 - Church
 - Desert
 - Boat
 - The Moon
 - Messy Bedroom
 - Perfectly Organized Kitchen
 - Bus stop
- Their job is to let the environment effect how they act and sing at the birthday party.
- After a few turns, let the other group go.
- Choose a different birthday boy/girl each time.

- **Two Person Environment**

- In a standing circle, give all participants 30 seconds to quietly think of a specific environment (ie. The circus, a football game, detention, etc.)
- Choose a child to begin by stepping into the circle, instantly beginning to act within the environment he/she thought of. When the player who was standing to his/her left in the circle becomes aware of what the environment is, he/she steps into the circle and joins the environment. Player 2 then says one line of dialogue to Player 1, Player 1 responds, then the scene is over and they take their place back in the circle.
- EXAMPLE: Player 1 steps into the circle and immediately begins wiping his brow from sweat. Player 2 enters the circle and looks equally hot and exhausted, and tries to pour the last drops of water from her canteen into her mouth. Player 2 says "I don't know how you convinced me to go on this hike through the Sahara Desert." Player 1 says "Well, you said you wanted a vacation in the sun!" Scene is over.
- Repeat in pairs going around the circle.

Drama Vocabulary:

Acting – pretending to be someone or something else

Environment – the surroundings or conditions in which we live

Imagination – forming new ideas in our minds

Scene – a sequence of continuous action in a play