

CORE PLAYWRITING SCHEME OF WORK

Lesson 5: Opening Moment/Scene

PLTS: Creative Thinking; Reflective Learning

APP: WAF3

1 Prepare for and Connect the Learning

Big Question on board as students enter:

Think about where your play begins. What is happening in your character's life at that point in time?

Thinking Time.

5 min

2 Agree Learning Objectives

- **Analyse** an opening scene to a play and **explain** what makes it effective
- **Apply** these ideas to the opening scene for our own plays

3 Present New Information Through the Senses

Reference first learning objective and introduce extract – explain that it is taken from a play called *The Miracle* (see resources). What is a miracle? What can we infer from the title of the play? What might it be about? Read extract from *The Miracle*. Check understanding of extract. Question group. Refer to first learning objective. What made the opening of the scene effective? Think, Pair, Share. Students think individually for 2 minutes or so, then pair up with a partner to discuss, then share ideas with the whole class. List on flipchart or board. Focus on WAF3 here and how the structuring of this scene is effective.

E.g.
Tensions between characters
A hint of things to come
A sense of the characters' wants etc.
Incongruity
Location

20 min

The TEEP Learning Cycle

6 Review – step back and reflect on your learning

Individuals read out some opening scenes.
Other students reflect and feed back on characters, location, tension and conflict, wants etc.

15 min

5 Apply to Demonstrate your New Understanding

Students spend the next 20 minutes writing their opening scene, using the guidance on the board and ideas from earlier in the lesson.

As a starting point, get them to emulate the stage directions used in *The Miracle*, but adapt it to their own setting. See examples from year 8 students at Shenley Academy working at level 2 and 3 for English (see resources).

20 min

4 Construct

Explain that now we have identified what makes an effective play opening, we are going to have a go at refining openings of our own plays. Explain the following to the students (write on the board or give as a handout if need be):
Look back at the work you've done on your characters and the scene that you started writing a few lessons ago.
Choose a moment in the life of your character with which to open the play.
Include at least two characters.
Go for something low-key, but with hints and suggestions of conflicts and tensions beneath the surface.
Bring in something to mark it as different from all the other days.
Try for a scene of some length – at least two pages in your writing journals.
Don't worry if it doesn't complete itself, focus on getting the characters talking.

10 min max.