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DRAMATIC WRITING

WHAT THIS EPISODE IS ABOUT

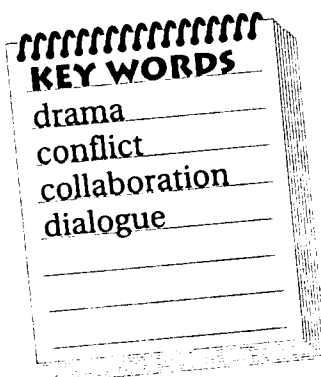
In this episode, students will learn tips and techniques for writing a dramatic script. By the end of this lesson, students will be able to

- ✎ define the term *drama*
- ✎ describe how dramatic writing is different from and similar to other kinds of writing
- ✎ apply the writing process to writing a dramatic script

VIDEO SUMMARY

Following a trip to a Children's Theatre production of *Anne of Green Gables*, the students get a new writing assignment. They are to take a well-known children's story and write a dramatic adaptation of it.

Bryan learns that good drama involves the audience emotionally. Drama is driven not just by what you see and hear during the play, but also by what you feel and imagine.



A local dramatic producer/director tells the writing-club students that the essence of drama is that one character wants something that another character doesn't want him to have. This is conflict, the heart of all drama.

Bryan works in a group with Brad, Sarah, and Lindsey. They try to collaborate on story ideas.

They often disagree, but they find ways to overcome their differences. They settle on adapting an unusual version of 'Hansel and Gretel.' The play focuses on the witch, and the drama unfolds from her point of view.

After helping write a rough draft that needs a lot of improvement, Bryan reads some other plays and a book about scriptwriting at

the library. Bryan and the rest of the group revise their play by writing sharper, more realistic dialogue and adding some humor to the plot.

Finally, the students present their play before the whole class. It gets even more laughs than they thought it would. Bryan says he has learned that each piece of writing takes on a life of its own and the end result can often surprise everyone—especially the writer.

BEFORE VIEWING THE VIDEO

Ask students to define the term *drama*.

Next, ask how many of your students have ever seen a play. What plays have they seen? Ask them to talk about their experiences with live theatre.

Ask students to explain the difference between a movie and a play.

Ask students what they think it would be like to write a play? How would it be different from the other kinds of writing they've done. How would it be similar?

Tell students to watch the video to see how the writing process is used to write a script.

WHILE VIEWING THE VIDEO

- 1.** After the writing-club students select "Hansel and Gretel," **PAUSE** the video. Organize students in groups of three or four. Ask each group to brainstorm a list of stories that could be dramatized. Working together, each group must choose one story to turn into a script.
- 2.** After the brainstorming session at Sarah's house, **PAUSE** the video. Ask each of your student groups to brainstorm ideas about their story. Then they should write the rough draft of their script.
- 3.** After the revision session at the library, **PAUSE** the video. Have each group exchange scripts with another group. Encourage the groups to provide constructive criticism for revision.



AFTER VIEWING THE VIDEO

After students have revised their scripts, they may publish them for others to read. You may also wish to have students perform their dramatizations for the entire class.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Schedule a field trip for your class to attend a live theatre production. Make arrangements with the theatre management to take students on a tour of the theatre after the play.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Anne of Green Gables

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/People/rgs/anne-table.html>

Institute for Readers Theatre

<http://www.readers-theatre.com/>