**THE CURIOUS SAVAGE**

**Script Analysis and Acting Scenes**

by Sarina Thomas

**UNIT OBJECTIVE**

Students will demonstrate their understanding of script analysis by performing a scene from *The Curious Savage.*

**PRIOR EXPERIENCE/CLASS LEVEL**

None needed; beginning class

**STANDARDS**

**TH:Cr3.1.HSI** a. Practice and revise a devised or scripted drama/theatre work using theatrical staging conventions.  
**TH:Pr4.1.HSI** b. Shape character choices using given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

**TH:Pr5.1.HSI** a. Practice various acting techniques to expand skills in a rehearsal or drama/theatre performance.

**TH:Pr6.1.HSI** a. Perform a scripted drama/theatre work for a specific audience.

**TH:Re7.1.HSI** a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.

**MAIN CONCEPTS**

Reading a play, analyzing a play, creating blocking, characterization, scene work

**LESSONS**

**LESSON 1: READING A SCRIPT**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to read and analyze a script by reading *The Curious Savage*

**LESSON 2: CHARACTERIZATION PART I**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to evaluate a character by studying the script and creating a character profile poster.

**LESSON 3: CHARACTERIZATION PART II**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to create a character by presenting a character collage while acting the part of their character.

**LESSON 4: Stage directions and Blocking**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to apply correct blocking technique by blocking a small scene.

**LESSON 5: PREVIEWS**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to act, by performing a scene.

**LESSON 6: FIX IT REHEARSAL**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will prepare to demonstrate their ability to act by applying their feedback and improving their scene.

**LESSON 7: FINAL REHEARSAL**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their improvements to their scenes by performing a small piece of their scene.

**LESSON 8: FINAL PERFORMANCES**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to act by performing a scene.

**THE CURIOUS SAVAGE**

**LESSON 1: READING A SCRIPT**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to read and analyze a script by reading *The Curious Savage*

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Scripts of *The Curious Savage*

**LESSON DIRETIONS**

**HOOK:** Write on the board the words “Curious” and “Savage”. Have the students define each of these words and ask for synonyms for each word.

Here are the definitions and synonyms found in the dictionary:

* **Curious –**
  + 1) Eager to know or learn something 2) Expressing curiosity 3) Strange, unusual
  + intrigued, interested, inquisitive, strange, odd, peculiar, funny, unusual, bizarre, weird, eccentric, queer, unexpected, unfamiliar, extraordinary, abnormal, out of the ordinary, surprising, unconventional, off beat, and unorthodox.
* **SAVAGE –** 
  + Adjective: fierce, wild, untamed, undomestical, vicious, brutal, cruel ferocious, violent, bloodthirsty, uncivilized, unenlightened, nonliterate, and rough, wild.
  + Noun: wild man/woman, primitive, beast, monster, barbarian, animal.

After having the student discuss these two words, have the students predict what the play might entail. What do you think this play is about? (Make sure that they don’t read the synopsis on the back)

**STEP 1:** *Instruction* Pass out scripts to the students. Assign parts (including someone to read the stage directions) and explain the following about reading scripts:

* Stage directions are for the actor to know what they are supposed to do but they are not read by the actor. These are in parenthesis and italicized.
* C, DR, UL etc. indicate the location of the stage (we will learn this more specifically later)
* In theatre auditions you are often asked to audition using a cold reading (meaning you are reading it for the very first time) encourage the students to read the script today as though you were auditioning for a play. Read the line in character and with meaning.

**STEP 2:** Read the script as a class. Stop often to clarify, ask questions and to review what has been read so far. Switch parts often to give all a chance to read.

**STEP 3:** At a good stopping point, break students into smaller groups so that all can be involved. In their groups have them assign parts again (including someone to read stage directions) and continue reading.

**CLOSURE:** Bring the students together. Refer back to the hook and ask which meaning of curious and savage most applies now that they have read more of the script. Ask students to predict what will happen in the script. Questions may include:

* Do you think Ms. Savage is really crazy? Why or why not?
* What do you think that she did with the bonds?

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed by their participation

**FOLLOW-UP** Reading the script will probably take more than one time period. Finishing the play can be done again in class or can be assigned to take home to read as homework.

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**LESSON 2: CHARACTERIZATION PART I**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to evaluate a character by studying the script and creating a character profile poster.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Scripts of *The Curious Savage*, Curious Savage questions handout (see attached), Butcher paper and markers (optional). Also teacher should come prepared to class with assigned parts and scenes for the class (see options in Lesson 3).

**LESSON DIRECTIONS**

**STEP 1:**  Review with the students what they have read so far. Have the students break into their groups to finish reading.

**STEP 2:** *Discussion* – As groups finish reading, provide for them the handout and allow for them to either discuss the questions in their groups, discuss the questions as a class, have students individually answer the questions in written form or you may choose to use it as an assessment.

Questions:

* Why do you think they John Patrick entitled his play *The Curious Savage*? What is the title referring to? How does that differ from what we originally thought?
* Why do you think Ms. Willie did what she did?
* If you were Mrs. Savage, would you have stayed or left? Why?
* What do you think Mrs. Savage will do with the bonds?
* What will become of the Savages? Did they get what they deserved? Why or why not?
* What is the lesson learned from this play? What do you think John Patrick is saying about society? About families? About money?
* The summary on the back of the script says, “The last scene . . . is a delightful fantasy where each “guest” in the sanatorium realizes at last some hopeless dream for something he was never able to realize” What are some of the dreams the “guests” realized?

**STEP 3:** *Instruct -*Preview with the class where the class is going. Let them know that they will be each be assigned a character and a scene from the play to perform for their final project. Their first task is to create a character and that begins with studying everything about that character.

**STEP 4:** *Guided Group Practice –*Assign students their particular part.Based on the parts they are assigned, assign small groups of students a particular character to focus on. Tell them they are to become the experts on that particular character. Give them the following assignment:

**What do you know about your character?**

As a group use the script to search for any facts or clues about your character including their history, mannerisms, personality, relationships to others etc. Write down everything and anything that pertains.

You may have them each individually write down answers that apply, or have one scribe for the group or you may have butcher paper and markers.

**STEP 5:** Have the students present their character posters to the class and tell about their character.

**CLOSURE:** Assign the students the following project: Students are to create a collage for their character. It should be the size of a single sheet of paper and include various visual images to depict their particular character. Show examples of previous projects.

***The Curious Savage***

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Answer the following questions:**

1. Why do you think they John Patrick entitled his play *The Curious Savage*? What is the title referring to? How does that differ from what we originally thought?
2. Why do you think Ms. Willie did what she did?
3. If you were Mrs. Savage, would you have stayed or left? Why?
4. What do you think Mrs. Savage will do with the bonds?
5. What will become of the Savages? Did they get what they deserved? Why or why not?
6. What is the lesson learned from this play? What do you think John Patrick is saying about society? About families? About money?
7. The summary on the back of the script says, “The last scene . . . is a delightful fantasy where each “guest” in the sanatorium realizes at last some hopeless dream for something he was never able to realize” What are some of the dreams of the “guests”?

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**LESSON 3: CHARACTERIZATION PART II**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to create a character by presenting a character collage while acting the part of their character.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Scripts for each character in each scene (I labeled them with their character and the student name in the case someone leaves theirs in the classroom). For optional scenes from *The Curious Savage,* see attachment.

**LESSON DIRECTIONS**

**HOOK:** Write on the board the words “Movement” and “Voice” Discuss with the students the importance of these elements in creating a character. Use examples: How would Santa Claus’ voice be? How would he move (including his posture, step, or even the was he sits)? What about the Tooth Fairy? How would they speak? Move? How does that differ from Santa Claus? You may choose to demonstrate these characters, or have a student volunteer do it. What if someone were to act the part of Santa Clause using the same voice we created for the Tooth Fairy?

Explain that with every character, the actor makes a choice in a voice and movement for their particular character. These choices, however, must be backed up by their nature and especially by the script.

**STEP 1:** *Transition –* Now that we have studied the script to learn about our characters, it is time to create a voice and physicality for our characters. Have the students think of their characters. How would they speak? How would they sit? How would they move?

**STEP 2:** *Practice –* Explain to the class that when we begin our next activity they will become their character. When you say “Begin” every student should sit like their character would sit, respond as their character would respond etc. They will be introducing themselves to the other guests of the Cloisters Sanitarium during one of their meetings. To do so, they will come to the front of the group (walking as their character would walk), introduce themselves and say at least three things about themselves (all as their character). They should include their collages as a visual. In addition to this, those listening can respond (respectfully) as their character would. For example, if Fairy is introducing herself, the Savages might be rolling their eyes or impatient. If Titus is presenting, the guests from the Cloisters might be defensive etc. During this entire presentation, students are to remain in character the entire time.

**STEP 3:** *Group Practice –* Assign each character their specific scene. Have the students get into their scene groups and assign the following tasks during their rehearsal time:

1) Read through the script at least twice marking their part.

2) Create a set for their scene (decide how many chairs and where, decide where the entrances are etc.

3) With any time remaining they should begin rehearsing.

**CLOSURE:** Bring the students together. Remind them to bring their script to the next class. You may choose to warm them of the memorization deadline now so that they can begin memorizing.

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed by their character collage, their introductions, and/or their participation.

Optional scenes from

*The Curious Savage:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PAGES** | **FEMALE PARTS** | **MALE PARTS** |
| 5-11 | 4 | 2 |
| 11-16 | 3 | 3 |
| 24-31 | 4 | 2 |
| 40-46 | 2 | 2 |
| 49-53 | 4 | 3 |
| 69-73 | 4 | 3 |

\*Option - If there are not enough boy parts, Mrs. Paddy could be converted into Mr. Paddy.

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**LESSON 4: Stage directions and Blocking**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to apply correct blocking technique by blocking a small scene.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**  3 signs of each letter: R, L, D, U, and C (so a total of 15 signs). Optional: Signs with do’s and don’ts of blocking.

**LESSON DIRECTIONS**

**HOOK:** Assign each sign to a student. Beginning with the student who has the “C” Have that student go up on stage where they think “center stage” would be. Ask for a volunteer with the letter ‘R’ to come on stage. Explain to the students that stage directions are from the reference point of the actor. Have the L student take their place. Explain that stages used to be raked at a slanted angle. Ask for the ‘U’ students to take their places followed by a ‘C’, ‘L’ and ‘R’ accordingly. Repeat with the ‘D’ students. When all the students have found their place have a sign-less student move around the stage and have the class shout where that student is on the stage. Act as director and tell the student specifically where to go on the stage. Let other students take turns being the director and telling the actor where to move.

A small assessment could be made by either quizzing students verbally or having them return to their seats to fill out a stage diagram with the proper stage directions.

**STEP 1:** *Transition –* Explain to the students the Do’s and Don’ts of blocking basics. Give or ask for examples as necessary.

Blocking Basics

Do:

* Cheat towards the audience
* Have a motivation to move
* Create Pictures

Don’t:

* Put your back to the audience
* Be a furniture magnet
* Upstage the action

**STEP 2:** *Instruction –* Review the schedule with students so they are aware when they need to be memorized and when their preview performances are. Encourage students to incorporate the blocking techniques during their rehearsal today. Optional: you may choose to have students write down their blocking in their scripts as an assessment.

**STEP 3:** *Group Practice –* allow students to get into their assigned scene groups and to rehearse their scenes. Teacher should be available to student if they have any questions or need ideas/help with blocking.

**CLOSURE:** Review the calendar with the students. Remind them that next period they must come memorized. Review verbally with the class the basics of blocking. Ask students to give examples of how they incorporated the Do’s or avoided the Don’ts during their rehearsal today.

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed by their stage directions worksheet and their participation.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Use the following diagram to write the universal theatre stage directions.

Please write the entire word, not just the letters.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Audience

**CURIOUS SAVAGE**

**LESSON 5: PREVIEWS**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to act, by performing a scene.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Feedback handout

**LESSON DIRECTIONS:**

**HOOK:** Bring the students together in a circle. Remind them that we are all here to help each other have great performances. What are some ways that we can help each other to have great scenes? How can we help members of our own scenes? How can we help members of other scenes? Explain that today they will be performing for the class. Express that the expectations are that those that are watching help those on stage by helping them to see where they can improve for their performance.

**STEP 1:** *Group practice –* Allow groups time to warm up and to practice their scenes.

**STEP 2:** As one of the groups sets up their stage, assign each of the students in the audience a specific actor to watch. Ask them to give at least the following feedback:

* 1 Thing they did great
* 2 Things that they can work on

Remind the students to be very specific in their feedback. You may choose to give examples of good feedback and remind the students of the basic criteria they are looking at (characterization and blocking). You may also choose to give the students a grade on their feedback.

**STEP 3:** *Performance –* Have students perform their scenes. Provide feedback for the students using the feedback handout (see attachment). Collect the feedback from students along with your own feedback. Repeat until all scenes have performed.

**CLOSURE:** After all groups have performed, if there is extra time you may choose to use that time as a teaching moment to focus on any particular general need observed in the scenes and address them with the entire class.

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed by their feedback and/or their previews.

Preview Handout

**Names:**

**Characterization** (Voice, physicality etc. )

**Movement** (blocking, character business etc.)

**Overall** (memorization, preparation, overall presentation)

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**LESSON 6: FIX IT REHEARSAL**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will prepare to demonstrate their ability to act by applying their feedback and improving their scene.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Feedback from previous class period.

**LESSON DIRECTIONS**

**HOOK:** That magical machine. Bring students into a circle. Have one student come to the center of the circle and take a pose. Within that pose they must have a consistent simple movement/gesture and a noise as those they were a machine. Another student joins the other and adds to their movement (preferably connecting their movement with the other. One by one students join the machine. Encourage a variety of movements and sounds. You can add to the effect by directing the machine to go faster, slow down and finally to stop.

**STEP 1:** *Discussion/Transition –* What did that activity require from the individual? What did it require from the whole? How did it feel to be a part of this great machine? What would have happened if we didn’t follow the same directions? Etc.

How can this activity apply to our group work in our scenes? How can we contribute to our scenes? How does what you do effect your group? The class?

Encourage students to contribute to their group ideas and to work together to improve their scene.

**STEP 2:** *Group Instruction* - Handout your feedback and the feedback from the other students to the specified groups. Allow time for the students in their groups to read over their feedback and to ask any questions.

**STEP 3:** *Group Practice –* Allow time for the students to rehearse in their groups. Provide guidance and assistance as necessary.

**CLOSURE:** Bring the students together. Have students share with the class some of the things they focused on in their rehearsal today and how they improved. Have each student share with a neighbor something they plan to work on next time.

Review the calendar with the students to ensure they are clear of final performance dates and all assignment requirements.

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed by their participation and/or effective use of rehearsal time.

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**LESSON 7: FINAL REHEARSAL**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their improvements to their scenes by performing a small piece of their scene.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Rehearsal self-evaluation handout, rubric (see lesson eight attachment)

**LESSON DIRECTIONS:**

**HOOK:** Assign the students an end-of the class period teaser. The teaser will be as follows:

* Prepare a 20-30 preview of your favorite part of your scene.

Following the day’s rehearsal, the class will come together and students will perform a small piece of their favorite moment from their scene to get the class excited for the upcoming performances.

**STEP 1:** *Instruction –* hand out the final performance rubric. Review the rubric with the students. Site examples from each of the categories and clarify expectations. Allow for questions from the students.

**STEP 2:** *Group Practice –*Allow students to break into their groups and give them time to rehearse their scene. They should be rehearsing with all of their props. Give them a time limit and let them know that the last 10-15 minutes of class are for their teaser as well as another activity.

**STEP 3:** Have each group perform their 30 second teaser for the class. Encourage and excite the students for their upcoming performances.

**STEP 4:** Bring the class together again. Ask students to reflect on their rehearsal time during class throughout the entire project. Hand out the rehearsal evaluation sheet and have each student evaluate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 in each of the categories. Provide clarification as needed. Have the students turn in their evaluations. You may choose to have the students write on the back of their sheet feedback from the unit (things that helped, what they liked/didn’t like).

**CLOSURE:** Remind students of their upcoming performance. Remind them to come prepared to perform and to bring all props and costumes.

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed by their rehearsal self-evaluation form, their teaser and/or their participation.

**REHEARSAL SELF-EVALUATION**

Take some time to reflect on your specific contribution to your group’s rehearsals. Rate yourself honestly on a scale of 1-10

(1 being no effort and 10 being 100% effort)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YOUR NAME: | **# 1-10** |
| **Attendance**  *Were you in class, on time and prepared to rehearse?* |  |
| **Using Time effectively in Class**  *Did you remain on task, focused, refrain from distracting others? Did you make an honest effort during rehearsal time?* |  |
| **Contribution to group**  *Did you share the workload when planning and presenting work? Did you provide encouragement & support for other group members? Did you contribute with ideas and directions?* |  |
| **Preparation/memorization**  *Were you memorized by the deadline? Did you make an effort to be prepared for rehearsal and for performance day?* |  |
| **Overall**  *Based on your contributions to the above, what overall score would you give yourself?* |  |

**REHEARSAL SELF-EVALUATION**

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(1 being no effort and 10 being 100% effort)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YOUR NAME: | **# 1-10** |
| **Attendance**  *Were you in class, on time and prepared to rehearse?* |  |
| **Using Time effectively in Class**  *Did you remain on task, focused, refrain from distracting others? Did you make an honest effort during rehearsal time?* |  |
| **Contribution to group**  *Did you share the workload when planning and presenting work? Did you provide encouragement & support for other group members? Did you contribute with ideas and directions?* |  |
| **Preparation/memorization**  *Were you memorized by the deadline? Did you make an effort to be prepared for rehearsal and for performance day?* |  |
| **Overall**  *Based on your contributions to the above, what overall score would you give yourself?* |  |

**THE CURIOUS SAVAGE**

**LESSON 8: FINAL PERFORMANCES**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will demonstrate their ability to act by performing a scene.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** *Curious Savage* Performance Rubric

**LESSON DIRECTIONS:**

**HOOK:** Visualization exercise. Have the students spread out and lay down comfortably on their back. Lead them in closing their eyes and to silently meditate on their performance. Guide them in taking deep breaths, in relaxing and in visualizing a great performance. Have them imagine their entrance, executing their first line and feeling triumphant at the end.

*Transition -*  Show confidence that they will all perform their best and produce great work.

**STEP 1:** *Instruction* – Review with the students, once again, the performance grading rubric. Site examples from each of the categories and clarify expectations. Allow for questions from the students.

**STEP 2:** *Group Practice –* Allow the students time to change into their costume and to warm up.

**STEP 3:** *Performance –* Students perform their scenes for the class. Teacher can evaluate the scene as a whole or the individual characters using the *Curious Savage* Performance Rubric.

You may choose to return to them their grades immediately or wait to record them and return them later.

**CLOSURE:** Congratulate the student’s on their performances. Discuss with the students the following to receive feedback: what did you learn? If you had more time, what else could you have done? Did you feel that you had enough time to accomplish everything? Too much time? What was the hardest thing? What was your favorite part? If you could do it again, what would you have done differently?

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed by their final performances.

*Curious Savage*

Performance Rubric

Actor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Character \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Superior** | **Excellent** | **Good** | **Fair** | **Poor** |
| **Characterization** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Energy |  |  |  |  |  |
| Listening/Reacting |  |  |  |  |  |
| Character Business |  |  |  |  |  |
| Physicality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Voice |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Movement** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Motivation |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create Picture |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interesting to Watch |  |  |  |  |  |
| Avoiding our don’ts |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Presentation** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Costumes |  |  |  |  |  |
| Props |  |  |  |  |  |
| Memorization |  |  |  |  |  |
| Preparation |  |  |  |  |  |

*Curious Savage*

Performance Rubric

Actor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Character \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Superior** | **Excellent** | **Good** | **Fair** | **Poor** |
| **Characterization** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Energy |  |  |  |  |  |
| Listening/Reacting |  |  |  |  |  |
| Character Business |  |  |  |  |  |
| Physicality |  |  |  |  |  |
| Voice |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Movement** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Motivation |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create Picture |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interesting to Watch |  |  |  |  |  |
| Avoiding our don’ts |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Presentation** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Costumes |  |  |  |  |  |
| Props |  |  |  |  |  |
| Memorization |  |  |  |  |  |
| Preparation |  |  |  |  |  |