

# ANNIE SEARS

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## Sample Lesson Plan – Imagining and Intro to Acting

Students have just seen a production of *Alice In Wonderland*.

**Grade Level/Class Size:** 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 24 students

**Lesson Length:** 90 minutes

**Curriculum Area:** Intro to Acting (focus on imagination and theme)

### Intended Learning Outcomes:

- The students will stretch and develop confidence in their imaginative abilities.
- The students will practice manifesting that imagination in their bodies – standing, moving, and communicating like their imagined character.
- The students will understand what it means to mime.
- The students will apply themes from *Alice In Wonderland* to their own experiences.

### Necessary Materials:

- Miniature door prop (like the kind Alice moves through when first arriving in Wonderland)
- Sheets of plain, white paper
- Markers/colored pencils
- A long table (or several tables placed side-by-side)
- Chairs

Assessment Strategies:		
___ Observation	___ Rubric	___ Peer-Assessment
___ Work Samples/Portfolio	<u> x </u> Performance	___ Self-Assessment
___ Anecdotal Notes	___ Learning Log/Journal	___ Focused Questions
___ Interview/Conference	<u> x </u> Other (explain): Teacher observation should suffice, as students aren't receiving an actual grade for their participation. So long as the students are engaged, brave in imagining, and enjoying themselves, the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	

### Welcome (2 minutes)

Teacher will say, “Hello, friends! My name is [blank], and I’ll be joining you today on our journey to Wonderland. We’re going to see some of the same things Alice saw, we’re going to become some of the characters she met, and we’re going to create our very own characters that could call Wonderland their home. Sound fun? Now, before we travel to Wonderland, we have to go over a few rules.

1. When I’m giving instructions, keep quiet and listen very closely. We won’t have any fun if we don’t know what’s going on. There will be plenty of time for you to talk and be loud, so you can be quiet while we’re explaining activities.
2. If you have a question, raise your hand.
3. No negative talk. Don’t say anything bad about yourself, and especially don’t say anything bad about one of your classmates. This is a safe space where we can all experiment and create and try new things without fear of being embarrassed. You wouldn’t want somebody to criticize you, would you? So how about we only encourage each other?
4. Try. Try so hard and invest yourself. You won’t have any fun if you don’t. In that line of thought, our last rule is...
5. Have fun!

“Alright, we’ll head to Wonderland soon. But first, would you like to see how our creative team here made the Wonderland you saw onstage today? Follow me!”

### Tour the Theatre (20 minutes)

Teacher will lead students around the theatre space, beginning by asking the students not to touch anything, emphasizing that their safety is most important. Teacher will take special care to point out backstage tech-magic that was used to create special effects in *Alice In Wonderland*, perhaps giving examples of how each backstage element could be used in other ways if a script called for it. Teacher can also ask students to think of another show they saw that used the same element (i.e. the fly system, the smoke machine, etc).

### >>Transition (1 minute)

After the tour, students will file back into the classroom space and sit on the floor, cross-legged, in a circle.

Teacher will say: “Please turn to your neighbor and tell them your favorite part of the backstage tour. What was most surprising? What was the absolute coolest?”

Teacher will allow a few students to share with the entire group.

### Introduction/Warm-Up Activities (8 minutes)

Teacher will say: “All right, before we start imagining together, it’s important that we know each other’s names. We’re going to play a little game to do that. Everybody on your feet!”

Begin with the **Name/Action Game (3 minutes)**.

The teacher demonstrates first, and students follow.

Students stand in a circle. One person starts by saying his or her name and making some sort of physical motion simultaneously. The other students then, as a unified group, repeat the leader's name and motion. The leader says, "Thank you," and the student next in the circle steps up with his or her name and corresponding action.

Follow with the **Machine Activity (5 minutes)**.

Students use their individual imaginations to create a unified product, requiring them to work together to become a single machine. Each student will serve as a piece of the machine, thus having the opportunity to use his or her imagination in creating whichever piece he or she would like to be. Each piece must have a repetitive sound and a corresponding motion. For the first round, the teacher will start the machine and ask a student to join. Students can jump in whenever they have an idea, whenever they see an opportunity to build upon fellow students' creativity. Once everyone is involved – repeating sounds and motions over and over again – the round is finished. Teacher can give an example with a group of three students, then divide the rest of the class into four groups of six and ask them to complete the activity several times in their small groups.

Introducing the Theme of Homesickness (4 minutes)

Teacher will say: "Fantastic work, everybody! I love how you were using your imaginations to create new sounds and motions, and I love how you were building your own creativity off each other's. Great teamwork! Now that we know each other, and now that our imaginations are ready to go, are we ready to enter Wonderland?"

Students will likely respond affirmatively.

Teacher will say: "Okay, you sure you're ready? That's a pretty big trip, and that's pretty far away from home. Can you think of a time you went far away from home? Were you on vacation with your family? Were you visiting friends? Were you in a different state? A different country? Remember what that place looked like. Remember what it smelled like. Remember the tastes. And most importantly, remember what you felt while you were there. Were you excited? Were you scared?"

The teacher will direct students to open their eyes, find a partner, and share about their trip with their partner. The teacher will regroup the students and ask a few to share the most interesting thing that their partner told them.

>>Transition: Entering Wonderland (3 minutes)

Teacher will say, "Wow. You're all pretty experienced travelers. I think you can definitely handle the unfamiliarity of Wonderland. Ready?"

Teacher will lead students through a **miniature door**, like the one Alice goes through when she first arrives in Wonderland. On the other side of the door, the teacher will look around in awe, indicating that the students should also imagine the space they have just entered.

Perhaps the teacher will point out certain imaginative elements of Wonderland: “Look at those trees! They’re so tall, and their leaves are so colorful! Oh, look at the flowerbed over there – careful! You don’t want to step on them! The White Rose wouldn’t be too happy about that, would she? Oh – I think I can see the Queen’s castle in the distance there! Can you see it? We’ll want to stay away from there. What else do you see?”

### Movement Activity #1 (8 minutes)

Teacher will ask the students to stand on one side of the room, lining up in four lines of six close to the wall. Teacher will then ask the first four students to walk across the room simply as themselves. Once those four have made it all the way across, then the next four will go, and the next four, and the next four, etc. This sort of line-by-line motion repeats as the teacher will ask the students to move across the space as a variety of characters.

If the group could find some discussion useful, the teacher can ask the students to identify some of the character’s traits before they move across the room. The teacher should always refrain from demonstrating, as doing so could squelch the students’ fervor to figure out the movement for themselves. For example, “We know Alice is very curious. What else do we know about her? Think about how you can show that on your body as you move.”

- Alice → (curious, proper, brave, surprised)
- Cheshire Cat → (mysterious, zany, reappearing and disappearing)
- Caterpillar → (conceited, has to move like a slinky to get his entire body somewhere)
- Dormouse → (sleepy, lethargic)
- White Rabbit → (in a rush, hoppy, scatterbrained)
- Queen of Hearts → (arrogant, harsh)
- Mad Hatter → (crazy, commanding, nonsensical)

If the teacher sees fit, he/she can showcase certain students’ performances: “Everybody, look at what [name] is doing! Can you show us again please? How about everybody tries that?”

### >> Transition (1 minute)

The teacher should be sure to make sure the students know that they are being actors right now: “This is what actors do. They figure out how to move and sound and be someone other than themselves. Great job acting, everyone!”

While explaining the following activity, the teacher will set four boxes full of various colored pencils/markers around the room and ask six students to gather around each. Then, the teacher will distribute a plain piece of white computer paper to each student.

Teacher will say: “Now, we are going to continue thinking *Alice In Wonderland*, and we’re going to keep using our imaginations – just like Lewis Carroll did when he wrote the book, and just like the team that imagined the version you saw onstage today. Sound like fun?”

### Imagination Activity (10 minutes, 1 conceptualizing and 8 drawing and 1 sharing)

At this point, each student should have his/her own piece of paper and be seated near a bucket of drawing utensils. The teacher will instruct the students to close their eyes and listen very closely.

Teacher will say: “Now, I’m going to ask you to think of a brand new character that you might come across in Wonderland. Think along the lines of something wacky like we just mimicked, such as the Chesire Cat, or the Doormouse, or the Caterpillar, or the talking flowers. You can make up something totally new, or you can start by picking your favorite character that you saw onstage today. Then add or take away or change something about them. Don’t feel like your character has to be the most unique or the craziest. This isn’t a competition. Just imagine whatever you want, okay? Go ahead and picture your character in your mind.”

Teacher will guide the students through the imagining by slowly punctuating the silence with this series of questions:

- Is your character a plant or an animal? Something else?
- What color is your character? Is your character multiple colors? Is your character covered in a pattern?
- Are they furry? Do they have scales? Skin? Are they slimy?
- What shape is your character’s face?
- What do your character’s eyes look like? Does your character have eyes? What about a mouth? A nose? Ears?
- What is your character’s name? This is very important.

Teacher will ask the students to open their eyes and draw their character in detail on their piece of paper, granting students plenty of time. As the students draw, the teacher will go around the room and encourage the students, asking them questions about their characters and complimenting their creativity. Teacher will also be sure that each student has written their character’s name on their sheet of paper.

After the students have finished drawing, the teacher will ask the students to form eight groups of three, and the teacher will give each group a number for use in a later activity. Within those groups, students can share their characters with one another, describing the quirky details they’ve imagined and drawn. Perhaps students can offer suggestions to one another and ask questions about specific choices their classmates have made.

### Movement Activity #2 (10 minutes)

Once the students have finished sharing with one another, the teacher will ask them to close their eyes again.

Teacher will say: “Now think of the character you just designed. Picture them in your head, and picture them in detail. Got it? Now your character isn’t standing still. He or she or it is moving. What does that look like?”

Teacher will guide the students through the imagining by slowly punctuating the silence with the below series of questions, based off Anne Bogart's Viewpoints:

- Does your character walk? Can he/she/it move on two legs?
- Does your character crawl, perhaps on four legs?
- Does your character have no legs? Does your character slither?
- Is your character stuck in one spot on the ground, like a flower perhaps? Then can your character sway?
- Does your character move slowly or quickly?
- Is your character fluid, or is your character rigid? Does your character follow a straight path, or does your character meander in a curvy path?
- What does your character feel? What are his/her/its character traits? How do those feelings and traits inform the way your character moves?

Teacher will ask the students to open their eyes, stand up, and set their drawings near a wall so that they're safe. Rather than asking the students to form lines this time, the teacher will ask students to meander about the space simultaneously. The teacher will first ask students to walk about as themselves, creating a clean slate. Then, the teacher will ask the students to move about like their characters.

Again, if the teacher sees fit, he/she can showcase certain students' performances: "Everybody, look at what [name] is doing! He/she is moving so quickly. But [name] is moving so slowly. See how diverse all our characters are? All of your imaginations are so different."

The teacher will then ask all the students to freeze. All but group 1, as identified earlier when students shared their drawings with one another, will sit down. The teacher will then ask group 1 to unfreeze and move about like their characters, showcasing their creativity. Then group one can sit down and group two can stand up, so on and so forth.

### Vocal Activity (5 minutes)

Once each group has had a turn, the teacher will ask students to close their eyes one more time. This time, students should picture their character moving around, and also speaking.

Teacher will say: "What does your character sound like? And what does he/she/it say?" Teacher can guide students through this series of questions:

- Does your character speak quickly or slowly?
- Does your character use the higher register of his/her/its voice, or the lower register?
- How does your character's emotion affect the way he/she/it speaks?
- Does your character use a lot of inflection, emphasizing specific words and syllables? Or is your character more monotone, keeping the pitch and pace steady?
- Does your character speak similarly to the way he/she/it moves, or does your character's voice contrast his/her/its movement?

Teacher will direct students, still with their eyes closed, to begin experimenting with their character's voice aloud. Teacher can give students these phrases to use at first, and once the students are more comfortable, they can begin to use their own phrases.

- Hello! My name is [blank].
- How are you doing today?
- What do you think you are doing?!?
- That's disgusting!
- I am leaving now.

Students can open their eyes and move to again sit in their group of three. There, students can show each other their voices. Perhaps they can offer each other ideas and ask each other questions about why they decided on that voice for their character.

#### >>Transition (1 minute)

Teacher will say: "Now that we know what our characters look like, move like, and sound like, let's find out what happens when our characters interact with each other. We're going to have a tea party, just like the one Alice went to at the Mad Hatter's house. And guess what? I'm the Mad Hatter. Sound like fun?"

Teacher will direct students to find a chair at the long table and place their drawing in front of them like a placemat so that nearby students can see their drawings and have a basic idea of the character each student will be portraying.

#### Tea Party Activity (12 minutes)

Once seated, the teacher will ask students to raise their hands and list off what materials are needed for a tea party:

- Tea
- Teapots and teacups
- Sugar
- Cream
- Small plates
- Biscuits
- Napkins

The teacher will point out that we don't have any of those things, so we're going to have to mime them. The teacher will ask students if they know what miming is, and teacher will give several students the chance to answer.

- Mime: the art or technique of portraying a character, mood, idea, or narration by gestures and bodily movement only; no sound or props are used

- Teacher will note, “We will be using sound, though, since we’ve imagined and practiced pretty awesome character voices.”

The teacher can exemplify miming by putting on the Mad Hatter’s “hat” and beginning to portray the character.

The Mad Hatter will lead students in miming a tea party. The Mad Hatter will grab a pot of tea and pour him/herself a cup, then pass the pot to the student on his/her right. The Mad Hatter will direct two other students to also grab a teapot from the middle and begin passing it around. Then, the Mad Hatter will ask for cream, sugar, a biscuit, so on and so forth. Students will begin to take initiative on their own as they pass items around the table and begin drinking/eating.

Once students seem comfortable with mime, the Mad Hatter can ask students to begin drinking tea in character. And once students seem comfortable with that, the Mad Hatter can ask students to begin talking to one another in character.

Every minute or so, the Mad Hatter will exclaim, “Move down! Move down!” Students will then take their drawings with them as they scatter and chose a different seat by different students and continue to interact in character, this time with different characters.

This activity should be playful, and the teacher should do all he/she can to assure that every student is having fun.

#### >>Transition (1 minute)

Teacher will say, still in Mad Hatter character, “All right. Tea party is over. You may all leave now. Now. NOW!”

Students will get up and leave the table, at which point the teacher can take off his/her “hat” and resume the role of teacher.

Teacher will say, “Excellent job. I had so much fun interacting with your characters – they’re all very creative!! Can we all sit cross-legged in a circle, now?”

#### Tying it Back to the Theme of Homesickness (4 minutes)

Teacher will say: “We just followed Alice to Wonderland, and we went far away from home just like she did. Remember when we talked about our trips far away from home earlier today, before we came to Wonderland? Did any of you say that you felt homesick while you were away? If so, you can relate to Alice. She felt very homesick in Wonderland, and she wasn’t sure if she would ever be able to get back to the place she felt most safe and loved. She did in the end, though, and when she made it back from her trip, she appreciated home more than she had before. Have you ever experienced that when you came home from a big trip? Sometimes we don’t know what we have until it’s gone, huh?”

Teacher will allow time for student comments and discussion.



Teacher will say: “Now it’s time for us to return home after our trip to Wonderland. Thank you so much for imagining and creating with us today. I had so much fun, and I hope you did too.”

Teacher will direct students to pick up their drawings from the tea table, move back through the miniature door, and find their parents.

<b>Potential Adaptations:</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase time, space, amount	<input type="checkbox"/> Scribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Include visuals
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decrease	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral explanation	<input type="checkbox"/> Use manipulatives
<input type="checkbox"/> Change	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer/tutor/partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Extend
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		
<p>If certain students are timid or unsure of any activity, the teacher will have to modify the activity to suit the student’s individual comfort level. For example, if a student doesn’t feel comfortable during the tea party activity, he or she can sit next to the Mad hatter the entire time, and the teacher can give him/her ideas of what to do. The teacher can also praise the student for any effort he/she puts forth.</p> <p>If a certain activity is going well, the teacher can extend the time we spend on it. Conversely, if an activity isn’t catching on, the teacher can spend less time on that particular activity. The lesson plan is loose.</p> <p>If an activity takes much longer than anticipated, it’s likely best to cut time from the movement activity or the tea party activity. As sad as either option would be, these are the activities that are most fluid. Students will need time to conceptualize, draw, and develop their character, so those activities are less fluid.</p> <p>If activities take much less time than anticipated, the teacher can always return from the machine activity from warm ups or talk amongst the students, asking them about their families, their career goals, their favorite foods, etc.</p>		