

LESSON 2

Role-Playing

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Develop skill in improvising action and dialogue.
- ◆ Identify experiences from other classes to role-play.

Warm Up



Discuss with your class specific historical events that have been altered or influenced by the role of one person.

role-playing

trying on the role of others, or assuming the part of another person in society.

Try on the roles of these immigrants coming to America. What is each one of them thinking as they view the Statue of Liberty? Are they excited? Fearful? How would you react in their place?

Have you ever wondered what you would have done if you had been at the scene of a famous historical event?

- ◆ What if you had been a runaway slave trying to find your way to freedom?
- ◆ What if you had been an early colonist during the winter of 1612?
- ◆ What if you had been a twelve-year-old seamstress working under terrible conditions in a garment factory during the early 1900s?
- ◆ What if you had been in Dallas, Texas, watching the parade, the day President Kennedy was assassinated?


You were not there, but you can experience the event through a form of improvisational theatre called role-playing.

Role-playing is taking on the role of a person other than yourself in an improvisation based on a given dramatic situation. Role-playing can help you grow socially. When you “try on” the roles of others, you have the opportunity to discover how they feel and what they want or need. Thinking as someone else helps you to expand your way of looking at things and strengthens your own decision-making skills. Often, the views and opinions you act out will be different from your own. Role-playing allows you to take safe risks with thoughts and ideas in order to establish your own set of values and beliefs.



ACTION



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- 1. Bringing History to Life.** Think about some of the historical events you have learned about in social studies or history, or look through your history book. Make a list of characters and circumstances that could be acted out. How could these scenes be re-created through role-playing? Select a character to portray in one of the situations. Remember to create the attitudes, voices, and actions that the real people would have experienced.
 - 2. Historical Scenes.** Invite social studies or history classes to suggest or outline different historical scenes based on their units of study.
 - 3. Presenting History to History Class.** Prepare the scenes as you would an improvisation. Invite the social studies or history classes to watch the scenes and judge them for authenticity.
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