

A graphic for Lesson 3. The word "LESSON" is written in orange, bold, sans-serif capital letters, with each letter on a separate yellow and white striped fan-shaped background. Below the word is a large purple number "3". The entire graphic is set against a black and white checkered background.

LESSON 3

Point of View

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Develop skill in improvising action and dialogue.
- ◆ Confront various personal behaviors through role-playing and role reversal.
- ◆ Demonstrate attitude changes and various viewpoints through role-playing.

Warm Up



Discuss the meaning of the following quote from *To Kill a Mockingbird* with the members of your acting group: “If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you’ll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

The way we think, feel, or act is called a point of view. Our personal point of view toward a person or situation is determined by who we are and also by where we are in our lives. Our needs and desires also influence the way we view a situation. A three-year-old who wants a dog would view the animal simply as a plaything and would not see the responsibilities that go along with having a pet. You, too, might want a dog, but because you are older, you would understand the expenses and responsibilities that are involved.

When we have the opportunity to think and act like someone else, we should consider, or evaluate, the situation from another point of view. A father being transferred to a job in a different city would have different needs, desires, and responsibilities than the other members of the family. If you were playing the role of the father, you would have to think about the situation from his point of view. In acting out the role, you would use appropriate dialogue and actions that would reflect his viewpoint to the audience. Acting out situations from different points of view helps you to become more sensitive and understanding as problems are confronted and worked out.

ACTION



“curtain”

a verbal command starting or ending a scene.

“freeze”

a verbal command given by the director to stop the dialogue and movement in a scene.

1. Exploring Different Points of View. To explore different points of view, try acting out some situations. By playing more than one role in each scene, you will be challenged to extend your own point of view.

Work with your class to establish characters with four very different viewpoints for each situation given. Work with your acting company to select one of the scenes to play, or try one your teacher suggests. Next, decide who will play each role.

Prepare a sign for each viewpoint by writing the character's name on a 12-by-4-inch piece of poster board with colored markers. Punch one hole at each end of the sign. Run approximately 10 inches of yarn through the holes to create a hanging sign. Wearing these signs will help the players maintain their particular point of view.

Begin the scene when your teacher or a member of your group calls **“curtain.”** The scene should begin with each player acting “in character.” Each participant in the scene should try to stand, sit, walk, talk, and respond as suggested by the character's point of view. When your teacher calls **“freeze,”** all dialogue and action should stop.

Then each sign will be passed one character to the right. After the signs are exchanged, the dialogue must continue with the viewpoints established by the four beginning characters. After all participants have explored the four roles, the scene should draw to an appropriate conclusion. If an ending cannot be reached, your teacher will verbally terminate the scene by calling out “curtain.”

Here are some suggested scenes to play. Four different viewpoints are given for the first scene. For each of the remaining scenes, work with your group to develop viewpoints for each character.

- a. A student has not been turning in her homework. The teacher calls a conference with the parent and the principal.
 - The student thinks that the teacher doesn't like her because the teacher keeps “nagging” her about the homework.
 - The single parent, working two jobs, wants her daughter to pass.
 - The teacher, who really cares, wants to give the student another chance.
 - The tough, authoritarian principal thinks the student needs more discipline at home.
- b. A teenager has abused her phone privileges. A family discussion includes the parent, a nosy neighbor, the teenager, and a younger sibling.
- c. A student who has just moved from a small town to a large city is having a hard time adjusting to the new school environment. The principal and a concerned teacher call the new student in for a conference and invite a popular, well-adjusted student to make suggestions.
- d. A teenager has stayed out past curfew. He arrives home to find his mother, grandmother, and kid sister worried and “waiting up.”
- e. A star athlete's grades are extremely low in science class. To stay on the track team, he must raise his grades. He is thinking of cheating on a major test. He discusses the situation with an older brother who dropped out of school, a classmate who cheats often, and his best friend, who is in the National Honor Society and would never cheat on a test, no matter what the circumstances.